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STATISTICAL COMMISSION

REPORT ON THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION

(22 February-3 March 1993)

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

OFFICIAL RECORDS, 1993

SUPPLEMENT No. 6

UNITED NATIONS

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NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures.

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SUMMARY

The major decision of the twenty-seventh session of the Statistical Commission was the adoption of the revised System of National Accounts (SNA). This was the culmination of 10 years of combined efforts by international statistical organizations, countries, non-governmental organizations and many individual experts. The efforts were coordinated by the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts, comprising the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations regional commissions, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Statistical Office of the European Communities. It updates, clarifies and simplifies the previous SNA, is more completely harmonized with other international standards in statistics and is applicable to all countries. It provides a fuller picture of the resources at an economy's disposal and, among other things, lays the groundwork for dealing with interaction between the economy and the environment and elaborates an analytical approach to the assessment of poverty. The Commission recommended that countries use the revised SNA, agreed that the United Nations regional commissions should play a major role in its implementation and requested the mobilization of resources for its implementation, including needed support for countries and the regional commissions.

The Commission also adopted an action plan, identifying 19 actions for strengthening international statistical cooperation and statistical development, as a result of a two-year review, which included input from an independent review group. The Commission confirmed that it was essential that the global statistical system focus its efforts, in a revitalized framework of cooperation, on overall statistical development, under the direction of a strengthened Statistical Commission and Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination, and with an enhanced regional dimension. This would promote more efficient use of the limited resources available for statistical work at the national and international levels. The Commission noted that concrete results had already been achieved and that enhanced cooperative attitudes and arrangements had developed in the international organizations.

The Commission also (a) adopted draft recommendations on tourism statistics, including the Standard International Classification of Tourism Activities (SICTA), as a provisional classification for use by countries, on the basis of reports of the World Tourism Organization; (b) endorsed the revised International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE) adopted by the Fifteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians; and (c) recommended that preparations by made for population and housing censuses in countries around the year 2000.

The Commission expressed its great appreciation of the work programme on gender statistics of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat and called on all the international statistical services concerned to provide maximum support to preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, to be held in 1995. The Commission agreed that high priority should be assigned to the selection and compilation of indicators to support preparation of the World Summit for Social Development in 1995. The Commission took note of the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) regarding the development and implementation of integrated environmental and economic accounting and welcomed the preparation of the interim SNA Handbook on Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting in accordance with the request of UNCED.

The Commission also discussed and endorsed work on further development and harmonization of international economic classifications, industrial statistics, service statistics, price statistics, international trade statistics, civil registration and vital statistics and special population groups and databases.

The Commission (a) stressed the great importance of technical cooperation programmes in all fields of statistics and urged that resources allocated to technical cooperation related to national accounts and other types of economic statistics be increased; (b) expressed its appreciation of the improved spirit of cooperation between the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP), Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) and Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA) programme; and (c) agreed that national needs with respect to social goal monitoring and measurement were paramount in guiding the future development of the global programme for monitoring the achievement of social goals in the 1990s.

The Commission requested the Secretariat to bring to the attention of relevant intergovernmental bodies the concerns expressed by countries, and endorsed by the Working Group and the Commission, about the impact of reductions in statistical resources on the possibilities of countries providing the data needed for their long-term economic and social development.

The Commission requested that steps be taken to further consider the decision of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) on fundamental principles of official statistics in the region of ECE with a view to preparing a draft set of principles at the world level.

With regard to the proposed programme of work of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat for the biennium 1994-1995, the Commission welcomed the Division's proposals as being broadly responsive both in format and content to the decisions of the Working Group at its fifteenth session and the Commission at its twenty-sixth session. The Commission also generally supported the options to modify the proposed programme of work to enable the Secretariat to do more on coordination of international statistics and services to national statistical offices. The Commission approved the proposed programme of work of the Division for the biennium 1994-1995 as contained in the note by the Secretariat (E/CN.3/1993/CRP.1), subject to the comments and suggestions made by the Commission.

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Chapter I

MATTERS CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OR BROUGHT TO ITS ATTENTION

A. Draft resolutions

1. The Statistical Commission recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

DRAFT RESOLUTION I

1993 System of National Accounts*

The Economic and Social Council,

Recognizing that the 1993 System of National Accounts 1/ updates, clarifies and simplifies the previous System of National Accounts 2/ and is more completely harmonized with other international standards in statistics,

Affirming that the 1993 System of National Accounts is a conceptual and accounting framework that is applicable to all countries,

Recognizing also that the 1993 System of National Accounts emphasizes flexibility, so as to encourage its use in economies that differ widely and to facilitate international comparisons,

Noting that the 1993 System of National Accounts completes the integration of balance sheets, thus providing a fuller picture of the resources at an economy's disposal, consolidates hitherto separate presentations of important elements of an economy, lays the groundwork for dealing with interaction between the economy and the environment, and elaborates an analytical approach to the assessment of poverty through the Social Accounting Matrices,

1. Expresses its deep appreciation to the members of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts - the Statistical Division of the Secretariat, the United Nations regional commissions, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Statistical Office of the European Communities - and non-governmental organizations, a number of member States and many individual experts in national accounting, for contributing human and financial resources, for more than ten years, to the development of the 1993 System of National Accounts;

2. Recommends that member States consider using the 1993 System of National Accounts as the international standard for the compilation of their national accounts statistics, to promote the integration of economic and related statistics, and as an analytical tool;

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* For the discussion, see chap. III.

1/ PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/SER.F/2/Rev.4.

2/ A System of National Accounts, Studies in Methods, Series F, No. 2, Rev. 3 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.69.XVII.3).

3. Recommends that member States use the 1993 System of National Accounts in the international reporting of comparable national accounting data;

4. Recommends that international organizations consider the 1993 System of National Accounts and its concepts when they review standards for particular fields of economic statistics and endeavour to achieve consistency with the 1993 System of National Accounts and, when differences remain, explain the rationale and provide a full reconciliation with the 1993 System of National Accounts to the extent possible;

5. Requests the Secretary-General and the members of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts to proceed with publication of the 1993 System of National Accounts in all six languages of the United Nations as rapidly as possible and to promote its wide dissemination;

6. Requests the members of the Intersecretariat Working Group to continue to be involved in coordinating the implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts;

7. Requests member States and regional and international organizations to support all aspects of the implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts - namely, basic data development; the issuance of handbooks, guidelines, manuals and special studies; training activities among both users and producers; and technical cooperation activities;

8. Further requests member States and regional and international organizations to provide assistance and support in refining and updating the 1993 System of National Accounts in areas identified in the research agenda, including further developmental work on methodologies, research on conceptual enhancements and emerging or unresolved issues, and refinement of current recommendations in the light of experience gained in implementation;

9. Agrees that the United Nations regional commissions should play a major role in the implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts in their respective regions and urges the Secretary-General to coordinate, at a high level, the mobilization of bilateral and multilateral resources for the implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts, including the necessary support for countries and the regional commissions.

DRAFT RESOLUTION II

Special session of the Statistical Commission*

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling that the Statistical Commission has completed a fundamental review of the structure and operation of the international statistical system and, as a result, has made recommendations and decisions for strengthening the international statistical system, including the following:

(a) A more active Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination to monitor progress in coordination/cooperation within the international statistical system between sessions of the Statistical Commission;

(b) Strengthened statistical divisions of the United Nations regional commissions and strengthened regional conferences of national chief statisticians in all five regions in terms of their responsibilities for statistical development in their regions;

(c) More effective working relationships between the Subcommittee on Statistical Activities of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and the Statistical Commission and the Working Group;

(d) The establishment of six task forces as mechanisms for developing a more integrated work programme among international organizations in the following subject areas: national accounts; industrial and construction statistics; international trade statistics; finance statistics; price statistics; and environment statistics,

Also recalling that the Statistical Commission, at its twenty-seventh session, stressed the importance of implementing the revised System of National Accounts in all parts of the world and unanimously recommended that it be adopted and endorsing the intention to pursue research into the unresolved issues and to work on future aspects of the accounts,

Aware that the twenty-eighth session of the Commission is scheduled to be held in 1995,

1. Decides that a special session of the Commission, of four or five days' duration, should be held in 1994 for the following purposes:

(a) To review progress made in the implementation of the recommendations and decisions for strengthening the international statistical system in general;

(b) To monitor progress made in implementing the revised System of National Accounts and review plans for the further essential research work already identified;

2. Also decides that the provisions of the present resolution should be implemented within the approved budget limit set by the General Assembly for the biennium 1994-1995.

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* For the discussion, see chap. XIII.

B. Draft decisions

2. The Statistical Commission recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decisions:

DRAFT DECISION I

Report of the Statistical Commission on its twenty-seventh session and provisional agenda and documentation for the twenty-eighth session of the Commission

The Economic and Social Council:

(a) Takes note of the report of the Statistical Commission on its twenty-seventh session;

(b) Approves the provisional agenda and documentation for the twenty-eighth session of the Commission set out below.

Provisional agenda and documentation for the twenty-eighth session of the Statistical Commission

1. Election of officers.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

3. Special topic (one item to be selected):

   (a) Statistical education and training (E/CN.3/1993/2, para. 47);

   Documentation

   Report of Statistics Canada

   (b) National and international statistical issues resulting from the emergence of customs and economic unions (E/CN.3/1993/2, para. 47);

   (c) Advantages and disadvantages of more flexible standards (classifications and other elements), concentrating in the first instance on classifications for economic activities and commodities;

   (d) Statistical implications of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade (E/CN.3/1993/2, para. 23).

4. Strengthening international statistical cooperation.

   Documentation

   Review report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination

5. National accounts.

Documentation

Report on updating and refining the revised System of National Accounts

Report on strategies, progress and problems in implementation of the revised System of National Accounts

6. Service statistics.

Documentation

Progress report

7. Industrial statistics.

Documentation

Report on industrial statistics, including needs for current industrial statistics

8. Price statistics.

Documentation

Progress report on the International Comparison Programme and other related international comparison issues

9. International economic classifications.

Documentation

Report on the development of classifications and implementation of the International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities, Revision 3 (ISIC Rev.3)

Report on computerized correspondence tables and functional classifications of expenditure

Draft revised Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG)

Draft revised Classification of Individual Consumption (COICOP)

10. Monitoring adherence to adopted United Nations classification.

Documentation

Report on the present situation regarding the adoption of classifications in countries and their relationship to adopted United Nations classifications

11. Demographic and social statistics.

Documentation

Report on progress in population statistics, including the 1990 World Population and Housing Census Programme and civil registration and vital statistics

Report on the 2000 World Population and Housing Census Programme

Report on statistics on special population groups

12. Development indicators.

Documentation

Progress report

13. Environment statistics.

Documentation

Progress report

14. Technical cooperation in statistics.

Documentation

Report on technical cooperation in statistics, including an assessment of agency support cost arrangements

15. Statistical activities related to the World Summit for Social Development.

Documentation

Report on the programme to monitor the achievement of social goals

Report of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean on its work on the development of poverty profiles

16. Fundamental principles of official statistics.

Documentation

Report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination

17. Technological development and databases.

Documentation

Report on the development of electronic methods for the compilation and dissemination of international statistics and standards, including metadata standards for international data exchange

18. Coordination and integration of international statistical programmes.

Documentation

Report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its session

Report on the coordination of data collection from countries

Overall review of the statistical work of international organizations

Report on plans of international organizations in statistics

19. Programme questions.

Documentation

Report containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat

Draft programme of work of the Statistical Division for the biennium 1996-1997, proposals for the revision of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 and first proposals for the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2003, and information on programme performance during the period 1992-1994

20. Provisional agenda for the twenty-ninth session of the Commission.

21. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its twenty-eighth session.

DRAFT DECISION II

Provisional agenda and documentation for the special session of the Statistical Commission in 1994

The Economic and Social Council approves the provisional agenda and documentation for the special session of the Statistical Commission in 1994 set out below:

1. Election of officers.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

3. Strengthening international statistical cooperation.

Documentation

Report on progress in the most critical areas addressed by the Commission at its twenty-seventh session

4. National accounts: implementation of the revised System of National Accounts

Documentation

Report on strategies, progress and problems in implementation of the revised System of National Accounts

5. Technical cooperation in statistics.

Documentation

Report on special issues in technical cooperation

6. Fundamental principles of official statistics.

Documentation

Report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination

7. Coordination and integration of international statistical programmes.

Documentation

Report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its session

Report on the coordination of data collection from countries

8. Programme questions:

(a) Programme performance and implementation;

Documentation

Progress report on the work of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat

(b) Programme objectives and planning.

Documentation

Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan in statistics for the period 1992-1997

9. Provisional agenda for the twenty-eighth session of the Commission.

10. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its special session.

DRAFT DECISION III

Strengthening international statistical cooperation

The Economic and Social Council, bearing in mind that the Statistical Commission, at its twenty-seventh session, discussed the question of strengthening international statistical cooperation, decided:

(a) That the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination of the Commission should meet in 1994 and 1995 for four days each meeting;

(b) That the provisions of the present decision should be implemented within the approved budget limit set by the General Assembly for the biennium 1994-1995.

C. Matters brought to the attention of the Council

3. The attention of the Council is drawn to the recommendation of the Commission that the sixteenth session of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination be held at Geneva from 13 to 16 September 1993. The Commission noted the statement of the programme budget implications of that recommendation read by the Secretary, in which it was estimated that no additional budgetary resources would be required under the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 as a result of the adoption of the recommendation.

4. The attention of the Council is also drawn to the decisions and other recommendations of the Commission (see paras. 30-49, 62, 75, 85, 93, 102, 109, 120, 129, 139, 148, 154, 162, 169, 180, 191, 203, 208-210, 219, 228, 229, 232 and 237).

Chapter II

STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL COOPERATION

5. The Commission considered item 3 of its agenda at its 452nd, 455th and 456th meetings, on 22 and 24 February 1993. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its fourteenth session (E/CN.3/1993/2);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General containing comments on the recommendations and decisions contained in the report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its fifteenth session, work done and additional action required for implementation (E/CN.3/1993/3 and Add.1);

(c) Report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its fifteenth session (E/CN.3/1993/21);

(d) Report of the Secretary-General on the proposed programme of work of the Statistical Division for the biennium 1994-1995 and revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (E/CN.3/1993/25);

(e) Note by the Secretariat containing the proposed programme of work of the Statistical Division for 1994-1995 and related information (E/CN.3/1993/CRP.1);

Programme 24 (Statistics) of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (A/45/6/Rev.1); revisions to programme 24 (Statistics) of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (A/47/6 (Prog. 24)) and a paper on the role of regional statistical conferences and statistical divisions, prepared by a drafting group established by the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination were made available to the Commission.

6. The Commission expressed its thanks to the independent Review Group, the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination and the international organizations concerned for the work which had resulted in the decisions and recommendations set out in the Working Group's report on its fifteenth session (E/CN.3/1993/21, annex II). The Commission noted that that process had fulfilled a large number of the expectations resulting from the discussion of the matter at the twenty-sixth session of the Commission.

7. During a wide-ranging general discussion, the Commission was of the opinion that the global statistical system could best be defined in terms of the units or elements that comprised it and the various interrelationships among them. In such a system, there would be no single hierarchy of units or entities. The Commission identified the following elements as referred to by the Working Group: the Statistical Commission, its Working Group, the regional intergovernmental statistical bodies, the national statistical offices, the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat, the statistical services of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system and other international organizations and bodies, such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT), the statistical services of other parts of the United Nations Secretariat, including the regional commissions and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); the Working Group noted that there might also be other units in the

system. The Commission confirmed that it was essential that the system focus its efforts, in a revitalized framework of cooperation, on overall statistical development, under the direction of a strengthened Statistical Commission and Working Group, and with an enhanced regional dimension. This would promote more efficient use of the limited resources available for statistical work at the national and international levels. The Commission noted that concrete results had already been achieved, and that enhanced cooperative attitudes and arrangements had developed in the international organizations. The Commission called for the recommendations and decisions contained in the report of the Working Group to be implemented as soon as possible.

8. The Commission considered that development of international statistical arrangements must be inclusive, giving all countries the opportunity to participate fully, and must recognize differences in statistical capacities among countries. Participation in the work of the Commission and its Working Group provided such an opportunity. The Commission agreed that an enhanced regional dimension in the system, with well functioning links with the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat and other international organizations was called for. In particular, this would involve the recognition and strengthening of the role of regional statistical conferences and regional statistical divisions, and would be particularly appropriate given the increasing regionalization of economic activities. It would also promote country participation in the system, additional cooperation and strengthening of the national and regional elements of the international system.

9. The Commission considered that, in looking at the global statistical system, it was important to determine the overall tasks of that system, identify the organizations involved and their relative skills and capacities, promote allocation of tasks, both functionally and geographically consistent with those characteristics, establish a time-frame for action and a system for monitoring and reporting progress. This would represent a pragmatic short-term approach to helping the system become more efficient. In the longer term, a rethinking of the overall organizational arrangement of the system and its elements might be attempted. A number of elements for alternative approaches to organizational structure and operational methods were suggested, including simplifying the structures and the overall system and expanding the use of flexible and pragmatic decisions aimed at reducing duplication of work. Some members of the Commission proposed that those questions be the subject of a substantive "audit" of the global statistical system. In any approach to improving the operation of the system, the autonomous nature of the international agencies with their own governing bodies was recognized by the Commission.

10. The Commission agreed that it needed better information on what the global statistical system was doing and on the collective priorities of that system, in order to carry out its overall responsibilities more effectively. It decided that an integrated report on the statistical programmes of the organizations involved, broadening the reports currently compiled by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat in cooperation with the agencies, would attempt to fill the information gap. The Commission also decided that it was important to address the substance of what was being done by the system. The sectoral approach adopted and the task forces established by the Working Group were supported. The Commission noted that duplication could be assessed within regions by a review of work plans of the regional organizations, using recent developments in the European region as a model.

11. The Commission agreed that a number of tools, when further developed, would facilitate its task, namely a classification system to permit a clearer presentation of the activities of the global statistical system by subject and up-to-date directories and inventories describing those activities. Through

such tools, the combined activities of all the organizations would become more apparent to the Commission and the organizations themselves, especially overlaps and gaps in activities. Examples of these tools, already at various stages of development by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat and the agencies, included the reports on integrated performance and plans before the Commission (E/CN.3/1993/22 and E/CN.3/1993/23), the Directory of International Statistics which, although it required updating, contained a useful initial classification of statistical subject-matters, and the inventory of statistical data collection activities (E/CN.3/AC.1/1991/R.7).

12. Several additional points related to overall statistical development and cooperation were made. For example, (a) a core framework of standards was needed but with provision for flexible implementation; (b) greater assistance was needed in the implementation of United Nations standards in developing countries and the countries in transition; (c) publications and other forms of dissemination should be reviewed, in particular to identify and avoid duplication of collection of data; and (d) expanded cooperation between the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat and regional statistical bodies was desirable.

13. The Commission took note of planned activities of the International Statistical Institute that were considered relevant to long-term statistical organization.

14. The Commission reviewed the recommendations and decisions of the Working Group as set out in annex II of the report on its fifteenth session (E/CN.3/1993/21). The Commission's comments, agreements, reservations and clarifications are set out below (the revised texts of the recommendations and decisions are contained in paras. 27-45).

Recommendation 1

15. The Commission broadly supported the recommendation that the Commission should meet more frequently if necessary. It would therefore be able to exercise better its leadership responsibilities in providing guidance and evaluation of international statistical work in the face of rapid change affecting statistical matters and would provide for continuity of participation by members. The Commission recognized that its influence was achieved through moral suasion and that more frequent meetings would allow this form of leadership to be more effective. Some representatives considered that an annual schedule should be adopted; others considered that annual meetings were not necessary but that they would be recommended as the specific need arose. Some members considered it adequate and realistic for obtaining continuity that the Commission meet biennially and the Working Group annually. That need could be established by reviewing the problems to be addressed and developing a programme of action. There was a general consensus that an annual meeting should be shorter than a biennial one and that alternative kinds of agendas and documentation, and procedural changes in the conduct of sessions would enable the Commission to focus on a limited number of broad strategic priority issues. The Commission recognized that annual meetings would have cost implications for international organizations and national statistical offices. The point was made, however, that the additional costs could be outweighed by the savings from reduced duplication. It was recognized that more frequent Commission sessions (and Working Group sessions if that were decided upon also) would need to be considered in the context of the overall schedule of international statistical meetings.

16. The Commission recognized that the objectives of providing leadership and continuity could also be served by more extensive communication through

electronic media, and noted that international organizations were applying such forms of communication to facilitate cooperation. The Commission agreed that by giving an expanded role to a strengthened Working Group, meeting annually, with an enhanced regional involvement, more continuous leadership could be provided to the global statistical system.

Recommendation 2

17. The Commission noted that there might be technical difficulties in implementing some aspects of recommendation 2 and requested the Working Group to address possible difficulties to allow the fullest implementation. In particular, difficulties in nominating officers for the forthcoming session at the end of a current session were recognized.

Recommendation 3

18. The Commission stressed that the Working Group should meet more frequently as a basic element of its functioning and that of the Commission, as the need clearly existed on a continuing basis. The Commission welcomed the extensive work already accomplished by the Working Group and decided that it should be strengthened on a permanent basis and take on an even more comprehensive catalytic and continuous role in coordination of the global statistical system. That would involve establishing better working methods and tools for presenting the necessary information to the Working Group and the Commission on the work of the system. It was suggested that the Working Group deal with technical matters and prepare decisions for the Commission so that the Commission could concentrate on policy issues. More frequent meetings of the Working Group, more contact between the Working Group and the Commission as a whole and more contact between the Working Group with other organizations would facilitate and provide the needed increase in continuity. The Working Group, after consultation with members of the Commission, should also be able to co-opt additional members, when necessary, to maintain wide and full representation and to deal with specific special issues that might arise.

Recommendation 4

19. The Commission welcomed the significant coordination already undertaken by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat and the international organizations individually and the Subcommittee on Statistical Activities of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), but endorsed the view expressed by the Working Group in paragraph 30 of the report on its fifteenth session (E/CN.3/1993/21) that more could be achieved by the Subcommittee, and that the Subcommittee should find what changes it should introduce to allow it to become more effective. The Commission noted that the subsidiary machinery of ACC, including the Subcommittee, was currently being reviewed. The Commission also noted that the task forces established by the Working Group (see para. 44 below) would report to the Working Group but that, given the important role expected to be played by the task forces both in substance and in coordination, the Subcommittee should consider the work of the task forces and take advantage of it at its meetings.

Recommendation 5

20. The Commission endorsed the Working Group's view that a new structure was not needed for the global statistical system, but that approaches were needed that could build on the existing goodwill and enable the existing system to work more effectively. The Commission noted that the work programme of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat included coordination of statistical work and that such a recommendation called on the Division to place

more emphasis on coordination and on support for the Commission. Given the range of responsibilities of the Division, it was clear that priorities had to be set. The work done by the Division under the programme was necessary for the promotion of coordination, but not sufficient. The system was characterized as having many centres, without a hierarchical structure and all the organizations involved had to work together. In that coordinating role, the Division was seen as having a primus inter pares status. To support the coordination process, the Working Group had specified a number of instruments or tools to be developed and/or improved. The Working Group and the Commission noted that the arrangements for work on international trade and the revision of the system of National Accounts (SNA) were good examples of successful approaches. The point was made that some of the coordination mechanisms in force in some national statistical systems might provide some guidance on techniques and mechanisms that might function well at the international level.

Recommendation 6

21. The Commission noted that some work in various fields had already been done by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat in cooperation with other agencies on assessing implementation and maintaining inventories of standards (see, for example, documents E/CN.3/1993/7 and E/CN.3/1993/15/Add.1, in which work related to economic classifications was reported). Other examples mentioned were the inventory of standards in the Directory of International Statistics and the inventory of classifications in use, the latter prepared by the Division in cooperation with other agencies for the Conference of European Statisticians. In setting up a more complete system in this area, the Commission requested the Division to take account of the following points: (a) a central file/inventory of international standards, classifications should be maintained and countries should be made aware of what was available; (b) in any monitoring it would be useful to know the incidence of standards being applied for national purposes and being applied for communication of data to international organizations; and (c) efforts should be made to find out the extent of national adjustment of standards, the reasons for non-adherence or slow adoption of standards, and problems in implementation. The Commission recognized that countries needed flexibility in the application of standards to meet their own needs. It was requesting that a monitoring system be set up to provide essential feedback to agencies which would be relevant to the provision of technical cooperation and to future revision of standards.

Recommendation 7

22. The Commission noted that the application of standards in flexible ways at the national level should to the extent possible not affect intercountry comparability of data. The point was made that international statistical standards might in some senses be understood as "generic methodological standards".

Recommendation 8

23. The Commission stressed the need for continuing efforts to reduce duplication of data collection from countries to supplement successes that had already been achieved. It endorsed joint approaches to data collection. It welcomed the existing tools that had been developed and were in use by the agencies, the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities and the Working Group to reduce duplication and share data. It endorsed the improvements requested by the Working Group, which included an improved classification of subject areas in statistics and the presentation of monitoring tools according to a subject-matter classification. Concern was expressed about different figures

being published by different agencies reflecting adjustments made by some agencies.

Recommendation 9

24. The Commission, in its functioning, recognized the autonomous nature of the international agencies with their own governing bodies and recognized that its influence was achieved through moral suasion. Consequently, the term "authoritative advice" was understood as advice that was professional, impartial and informed, and therefore to be taken seriously into account by countries and international organizations in the development of their work programmes. The advice would in part be based on a review of integrated work programmes, structured according to a classification of subjects, which would permit the identification of gaps and overlaps. The "allocation of statistical subjects" was not intended to exclude situations in which, in a particular field, one or more organizations might be active, carrying out work on different aspects or issues that were complementary to each other. That would also be made clear through joint work programmes. The Commission noted that reports were available to it at the current session according to an existing classification of subjects and that the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities would consider possible improvements to the classification.

Recommendation 10

25. The Commission considered that the role of the regional statistical conferences and regional statistical divisions was vital to the improved development of the global statistical system and its coordination. That system should depend upon and respond to regional influences. The point was made that national statistical services could help strengthen the regional statistical divisions through the provision of training facilities, for example. The Commission noted that in the Secretariat, as part of the restructuring in the economic and social fields, the extent of decentralization away from Headquarters in order to strengthen the role and increase the responsibilities of the regional commissions was being considered. The Secretary-General had indicated that the restructuring would also tighten their links with Headquarters. The Commission requested that the recommendation be followed up through all available Secretariat and intergovernmental channels. The recommendation was understood as recognition of the authority and responsibility of the international agencies in their subject-matters at the regional level, and as calling for regional involvement in those subjects, where appropriate. The situation was similar to the relationship between those agencies and the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat at the world level.

Decisions

26. The Commission took note of decisions 1-9 of the Working Group and made some additional comments on decisions 4 and 9, as set out below.

Decision 4

27. The Commission strongly endorsed the establishment of the six task forces by the Working Group and endorsed their terms of reference and the reporting arrangements that had been set up. The Commission urged all agencies to give the utmost priority and effort to the work of the task forces. The Commission took note of the information provided on the intended coverage and methods of work of several of the task forces and decided that additional information on the progress of the task forces should be provided under the relevant agenda items. The possibility of establishing a task force on service statistics was

considered and the Commission asked the Working Group to consider the matter further at its forthcoming session.

Decision 9

28. The Commission was informed of the details of the proposal of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat that had been endorsed by the Working Group in connection with decision 9; namely to (a) continue to collect, compile and disseminate nationally reported data; (b) supplement the nationally reported data with adjusted national data, where necessary and technically feasible, to make them more compatible with international standards, and prepare estimates for missing data, also where technically feasible, so that the adjusted national data and estimates were seen as complementary to reported data; (c) include in its databases adjusted data and estimates prepared by other international organizations with competence in a particular field, along with full citations and notes to explain the sources and avoid duplication of effort and proliferation of conflicting data; (d) maintain databases of reported data, adjusted data and estimates for missing data, each appropriately identified; and (e) disseminate data to users or provide a system for informing users of the availability and nature of available adjusted and/or estimated data. Such a policy would require that the methodologies for making adjustments and estimates be sound and fully described, and that national authorities be generally aware that international statistical publications might contain adjustments relating to national data for international comparability purposes as well as estimates for missing data. At the same time countries that had not reported data, or whose reported data had been adjusted, could be requested to provide comparable data if available.

29. The Commission took note of the concern expressed by one representative on the decision of the Working Group about adjustments to nationally reported data.

Action by the Commission

30. The Commission:

(a) Adopted recommendations 1-10 as set out in paragraphs 31-40 below, with comments (see paras. 15-25);

(b) Took note of decisions 1-9 as set out in paragraphs 41-49 below, with comments (see paras. 27-29);

(c) Bearing in mind the initiatives taken, as set out above, and as a pragmatic measure to give impetus to such efforts, decided to recommend to the Economic and Social Council that (i) the Commission hold a special session in 1994 of eight half days spread over five days, with a possible consequence that its regular session, scheduled for 1995, would also be reduced to eight half days. (One representative was opposed to recommendation (i). Some representatives expressed concern about the budgetary implications of holding additional meetings.)

Recommendation 1

31. The Commission broadly agreed that it should meet more frequently, if necessary (see para. 30 (c)). (Several representatives were concerned that such additional meetings, if needed for programmatic reasons, not give rise to additional costs.)

Recommendation 2

32. The Commission decided, with immediate effect:

(a) To nominate officers for the following session at the end of a current session, with formal election at the beginning of the following session, to re-elect the same persons a number of times as officers and to provide for the officers to meet informally;

(b) To request the Secretariat to give a copy of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council to new officers and to consider drafting a popular version of the rules incorporating practical hints;

(c) To request the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat to invite chairpersons of regional conferences of chief statisticians to participate in the sessions;

(d) To request participants to present their reports to the Commission as documents or background papers and not as lengthy oral statements;

(e) To request the Secretariat to ensure that specific agenda items were well prepared and well documented through discussions and reports of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities and/or the Working Group.

Recommendation 3

33. The Commission decided with immediate effect:

(a) To recommend to the Economic and Social Council that the Working Group hold one session a year, of four days' duration;

(b) To determine the membership of the Working Group at the end of each session of the Commission and give preference to newly nominated officers for the next session;

(c) To request the Statistical Division to invite the chairpersons of the regional conferences of chief statisticians to participate in the sessions of the Working Group;

(d) To request the Working Group to prepare short reports on its sessions and to ensure that the sessions mainly result in specific documentation for the Commission.

Recommendation 4

34. The Commission decided with immediate effect:

(a) To request the Statistical Division and the agencies to place more emphasis on coordination matters;

(b) To request the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities to form ad hoc groups for special topics;

(c) To request the ACC Subcommittee to prepare specific documentation on appropriate issues for the Commission, through the Working Group;

(d) To request the ACC Subcommittee to ensure that reports on its meetings provided to the Commission were not lengthy.

Recommendation 5

35. The Commission requested the Statistical Division:

(a) To find ways to strengthen its role in serving the purposes and work of the Commission;

(b) To place more emphasis on coordination matters.

Recommendation 6

36. The Commission requested the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat, in cooperation with the statistical divisions of the regional commissions and other relevant agencies, to set up a system for monitoring adherence to adopted United Nations classifications, provide a description of the present situation on the adoption of classifications in the member countries and their relationship to adopted United Nations classifications, and submit a progress report to the Commission at its twenty-eighth session.

Recommendation 7

37. The Commission requested the Working Group to consider the following as a possible special topic for discussion at the Commission's twenty-eighth session, in 1995: "Advantages and disadvantages of more flexible standards (classifications and other elements), concentrating in the first instance on classifications for economic activities and commodities (International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities, Revision 3; the General Industrial Classification of Economic Activities within the European Communities, revised; and other classifications)".

Recommendation 8

38. The Commission requested the Statistical Division and the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities to give continual attention to reducing duplication in collecting and processing data from member countries, and requested a progress report for each session of the Commission, along the lines of chapter I of the inventory of statistical data collection activities (see E/CN.3/AC.1/1991/R.7); the report (and the inventory) should be reorganized along subject-matter lines.

Recommendation 9

39. The Commission decided that its role should include:

(a) Giving authoritative advice on the allocation of statistical subjects to the agencies concerning statistical work, development/revision of standards and technical assistance;

(b) Giving authoritative advice on the detailed agreements between the agencies on cooperation regarding the actual work to be performed.

Recommendation 10

40. The Statistical Commission:

(a) Endorsed the views of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination related to strengthening the role of the regional statistical divisions and conferences of chief statisticians in the activities of the Statistical Commission and within the global statistical community;

(b) Recommended that regional commissions establish or reinforce conferences of national chief statisticians, technically served by the respective statistical divisions;

(c) Recommended that the regional conferences of chief statisticians, working in close collaboration with the Statistical Commission, act as the focus of regional statistical development. In that role they and the respective regional statistical divisions should be involved in developing, revising, testing and implementing standards and in monitoring their application, as well as in coordinating technical assistance;

(d) Recommended that regional commissions strengthen their statistical divisions to raise the profile of statistical work within each commission's programme of work;

(e) Requested specialized agencies, regional development banks and relevant United Nations bodies to cooperate to the fullest extent with the statistical divisions, especially in technical assistance projects;

(f) Requested the Statistical Division and the regional commissions, within the context of the Secretary-General's overall restructuring of the United Nations system, to determine the optimal division of effort between Headquarters and the regions.

Decision 1

41. The Working Group decided that, for the twenty-seventh session of the Statistical Commission, in 1993, the Statistical Division should continue its informal practice of inviting chairpersons of regional conferences to attend Commission sessions.

Decision 2

42. The Working Group requested the Secretariat to develop proposals presenting several options to the Commission on how the Statistical Division might restructure its work programme to respond to those recommendations, including an indication of internal reallocations of resources that might be necessary.

Decision 3

43. The Working Group requested that the Statistical Division and the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities submit inter-agency planning reports on a subject basis, where feasible, to the Commission at its twenty-seventh session.

Decision 4

44. The Working Group identified six subject areas where a need for review was considered a priority. The Working Group having noted that task force mechanisms already existed for two of the areas, established new task forces for the other four and, with the agreement of the agencies concerned, appointed conveners for each of the task forces as follows:

1. National accounts (already existing; convener: Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts);

2. Industrial and construction statistics (convener: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development);

3. International trade statistics (already existing; convener: General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade);

4. Finance statistics (convener: International Monetary Fund);

5. Price statistics including the International Comparison Programme (convener: Statistical Office of the European Communities);

6. Environment statistics (convener: Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat).

Decision 5

45. The Working Group requested the task forces established under paragraph 44 to investigate ways to carry out the evaluations and to carry them out to the extent possible.

Decision 6

46. The Working Group requested the task forces established under paragraph 44 to address the question of publications in the course of their reviews of the particular subject areas. In particular the Working Group requested the task forces to consider the review undertaken by the Conference of European Statisticians, and set up a similar review. The Working Group specified that that review should primarily concern publications in printed or similar form, but the relationship with machine-readable forms of dissemination should be taken into account. The Working Group considered that it would be in a position to consider the matter further when it had received the task force reports.

Decision 7

47. The Working Group requested the task forces established under paragraph 44 to carry out, in their particular subject areas, the two tasks described in paragraph 68 (a) and (b) of the report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its fifteenth session (E/CN.3/1993/21).

Decision 8

48. The Working Group decided to bring to the attention of the Statistical Commission once again its concerns relating to technical cooperation.

Decision 9

49. The Working Group endorsed the ideas set out in the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/AC.1/1992/R.3/Add.1) concerning the Statistical Division's plans for continuing to collect, compile and disseminate nationally reported data and to extend its adjustment and estimation work to all fields of its responsibility as far as possible, in order to meet the wide range of user needs. The Working Group decided that those plans should be brought to the attention of the specialized agencies for consideration.

Chapter III

NATIONAL ACCOUNTS AND BALANCES

A. System of National Accounts (SNA)

50. The Commission considered item 4 (a) of its agenda at its 453rd, 454th, 463rd and 464th meetings, on 23 February and 2 and 3 March 1993. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts on the revision of the System of National Accounts (E/CN.3/1993/4 and Add.1 and 2);

(b) Note by the International Labour Office concerning statistics of employment in the informal sector (E/CN.3/1993/5);

(c) Report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts on implementation of the revised System of National Accounts (E/CN.3/1993/6);

(d) Report of the Secretary-General containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1993/24, sect. I);

(e) Draft of the revised System of National Accounts (PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/SER.F/2/Rev.4).

The report of the Interregional Seminar on the Revision of the System of National Accounts, held in Aguascalientes, Mexico, in October 1992 (ESA/STAT/AC.43/8) was made available to the Commission as a background document.

51. Ms. Carol Carson, on behalf of the member organizations of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA) (the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations regional commissions, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), OECD and EUROSTAT), introduced the SNA documents for discussion.

52. The following eight major substantive issues addressed by ISWGNA in its report (E/CN.3/1993/4/Add.1) were brought to the attention of the Commission: financial intermediation service charges indirectly measured; imputed rent on government buildings; monetary gold; market/non-market output; mineral exploration; consumer subsidies; formal/informal activities; and environmental accounting.

53. The Commission noted the substantial effort made to have the final draft of the SNA before it, as it had requested at its twenty-sixth session. It also noted that ISWGNA had continued the broad consultative process in all regions of the world. That process was the hallmark of the revision procedure and had resulted in a revised SNA that was considered to be a vast improvement upon its predecessor, the 1968 SNA. The Commission also noted that, at the outset of the revision, the goals had been to clarify and simplify the 1968 SNA, update it and harmonize it more closely with other sets of statistical standards. The revised SNA represented a considerable achievement in meeting each of those goals.

54. The Commission expressed its deep appreciation to ISWGNA for its coordinating efforts and for the substantial resources provided by its participating organizations in carrying out the technical aspects of the work. It expressed its thanks to Mr. Peter Hill and Mr. André Vanoli, who were the

primary consultants, and to Ms. Carol Carson, who provided management support to ISWGNA. It recognized that national statistical offices had made substantial contributions to the revision process both in cash and in kind (e.g., in preparing drafts and translations), by hosting meetings (since the twenty-sixth session of the Commission, meetings had been held in Zimbabwe and Mexico) and by making their experts available for participation in the revision process, and expressed its thanks to them for those contributions. In all, about 50 experts in national accounting and other fields, from about 40 countries, had participated in the revision process, and the Commission recognized the contributions they had made. It also expressed its thanks to the International Association for Research in Income and Wealth for its assistance with administrative matters, and to several international organizations that maintained statistical systems for their collaborative efforts.

55. The draft of the revised System of National Accounts (PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/SER.F/2/Rev.4) was welcomed unanimously as a major achievement and the culmination of 10 years of effort to improve the basis of national accounts, to extend the scope of the national accounting framework and to harmonize different statistical systems. The revised SNA was flexible enough to be applied in different circumstances and to be extended to alternative analyses, such as social accounting matrices and environmental accounting. The readability of the draft was praised.

56. It was also noted that in such a vast undertaking it was impossible to satisfy the preferred positions of all countries on all subjects. Nevertheless, it was felt that a satisfactory balance had emerged and that the draft adequately represented a general consensus on most issues. In that context, the high degree of harmonization with the fifth edition of the Balance of Payments Manual of the International Monetary Fund was welcomed. There were a number of areas in which some reservations were expressed, but not insisted upon:

(a) Several representatives expressed regret that all research and development expenditure continued to be treated as current expenditure. It was noted that, in contrast, all mineral exploration expenditure was treated as capital expenditure;

(b) Two representatives expressed regret that the concept of financial gold had been dropped from the SNA;

(c) Several representatives expressed regret that the earlier decision to include imputed rent for buildings owned and occupied by Governments and non-profit institutions serving households had been reversed;

(d) One representative suggested that the proposal to treat military durables other than offensive weapons as fixed capital should be accompanied by treatment of armaments as inventories, rather than current expenditure;

(e) Several representatives were of the opinion that more precision was needed concerning the construction of production accounts for households;

(f) One representative was of the opinion that the distinction between actual final consumption and final consumption expenditure unnecessarily complicated the sequence of accounts;

(g) Certain representatives expressed regret that no final solution had been found for the identification and treatment of consumer subsidies.

57. Several representatives mentioned the importance and difficulty of measuring the informal sector. The representative of the International Labour

Organisation (ILO) reported orally on the results of the discussion at the Fifteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS). Reference should be made in the chapter on institutional units and sectors to the work being done by ICLS on developing standards for the informal sector.

58. The Commission addressed in detail the problem of financial intermediation service charges indirectly measured. While most representatives recognized that it was desirable in principle to allocate those charges fully, an appreciable number expressed the view that there were many methodological and practical difficulties that had not yet been resolved. One member indicated also that there might be political difficulties to be taken into account. They also regretted that the treatment of those charges in the SNA gave rise to an inconsistency with the Balance of Payments Manual of the International Monetary Fund and could likewise be inconsistent with the European System of Integrated Economic Accounts (ESA) being developed by EUROSTAT. Other representatives agreed with the treatment in the existing text, citing their own experience in allocating financial intermediation charges and new approaches that they were considering.

59. In order to address the views of those who had expressed difficulties in implementing the proposed treatment, ISWGNA proposed a flexible treatment that recognized the desirability of allocating the charges fully while allowing sufficient flexibility in implementation to reflect the current circumstances in particular countries or groups of countries. The ISWGNA proposal was accepted unanimously by the Commission. The proposal (E/CN.3/1993/4/Add.2) consisted of five elements:

(i) The present statement in the text that "In principle, the total output should be allocated among users for which no explicit charge is made" should be accepted;

(ii) Those countries or groups of countries that could not currently allocate those charges explicitly to specific users should be permitted to allocate them all to intermediate use (the 1968 SNA de facto solution);

(iii) Those countries or groups of countries that could allocate charges to both intermediate and final use should be permitted to do so;

(iv) Those countries that allocated charges entirely to intermediate consumption should be requested to prepare, as soon as they could, supplementary estimates showing an explicit allocation to specific users and the effect that had on gross domestic product, gross national income and other relevant aggregates;

(v) Those countries that allocated charges to both intermediate and final use should be requested to identify those allocations separately.

60. The information provided in the last two elements of the proposal would facilitate international comparisons on either basis.

61. In addition, it was suggested that the Statistical Commission request ISWGNA to place the highest priority on developing, in the near future, practical guidelines, including any necessary methodological work, for explicit allocation of financial intermediation service charges to specific users. The work should draw on the experiences of those countries currently implementing, or about to implement, a system of full allocation in order to review their procedures; it should also draw on the work being carried out in those countries that had indicated major impediments to full allocation.

Action taken by the Commission

62. The Commission:

(a) Unanimously recommended the adoption of the revised System of National Accounts, subject to the amendments recommended by ISWGNA in documents E/CN.3/1993/4/Add.1 and 2. ISWGNA was urged:

(i) To ensure publication of the revised SNA in English before the end of 1993;

(ii) To expedite the publication of other language versions as soon as possible thereafter, noting that considerable revision to the current drafts was necessary to ensure the use of idiomatic language and correct technical terms;

(b) Agreed, in line with past practice in the adoption of other international recommendations of the Commission, that the decisions of the Commission and the substance of its report would be reflected in the front matter of the revised SNA when published.

1993 System of National Accounts

63. At the 463rd meeting, on 2 March 1993, the representative of Mexico, on behalf of Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Morocco, the Netherlands, Poland and Zambia, introduced a draft resolution (E/CN.3/1993/L.5) entitled "System of National Accounts, 1993", which read as follows:

"The Economic and Social Council,

"Recognizing that the System of National Accounts, 1993, updates, clarifies and simplifies the previous SNA and harmonizes it more completely with other sets of international standards in statistics,

"Affirming that the 1993 SNA is a conceptual and accounting framework that is applicable to all countries,

"Recognizing also that the 1993 SNA emphasizes flexibility, thus acknowledging the need to encourage its use in economies that differ widely and to facilitate international comparisons,

"Noting that the 1993 SNA completes the integration of balance sheets, thus providing a fuller picture of the resources at an economy's disposal, consolidates hitherto separate presentations of important elements of an economy and lays the groundwork for dealing with interaction between the economy and the environment, and elaborates an analytical approach to the assessment of poverty through the Social Accounting Matrices,

"1. Expresses its deep appreciation to the member organizations of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (the Statistical Division of the United Nations, the regional commissions of the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Statistical Office of the European Communities and the World Bank), non-governmental organizations, a number of member States and many individual experts in national accounting for their contributions in the form of human and financial resources, to the development of the 1993 SNA, over a period of more than ten years;

"2. Recommends that member States consider using the 1993 SNA as the international standard for the compilation of their national accounts statistics, as an analytical tool, and to promote the integration of economic and related statistics at the national and international levels;

"3. Recommends that member States use the 1993 SNA in the international reporting of comparable national accounting data;

"4. Requests the Secretary-General and the members of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts to proceed with publication of the 1993 SNA in all six languages of the United Nations as rapidly as possible and to promote its wide dissemination;

"5. Also requests member States and regional and international organizations to support all aspects of the implementation of the SNA - namely, basic data development; the issuance of handbooks, guidelines, manuals and special studies; training activities among both users and producers; and technical cooperation activities;

"6. Further requests member States and regional international organizations to assist in support of further developmental work on methodologies identified in the research agenda;

"7. Urges the Secretary-General to coordinate at a high level the mobilization of bilateral and multilateral resources for the implementation of the 1993 SNA."

64. At the 464th meeting, on 3 March, the Commission orally amended the draft resolution. The Commission then adopted the draft resolution, as orally amended (see chap. I, sect. A, draft resolution I).

B. Implementation of the revised System of National Accounts (SNA)

65. The Commission considered item 4 (b) of its agenda at its 454th and 455th meetings, on 23 and 24 February 1993. It had before it the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA) on the implementation of the revised System of National Accounts (E/CN.3/1993/6).

66. The report outlined four areas where a coordinated international effort was critical: basic data development; handbooks, guidelines, manuals and special studies; training; and technical cooperation/assistance. ISWGNA also made suggestions about future work, for which resources had not yet been committed. ISWGNA identified a range of activities carrying forward a research agenda that would avoid lengthy delays in making major innovations in national accounts. With respect to publication of the revised SNA, ISWGNA was planning to publish the English version in 1993, with work to go forward on the other language versions as soon as the English manuscript including all changes, was available for translation - targeted for the end of June 1993. With respect to implementation, ISWGNA suggested a continuing role. It could possibly identify topics for research, seeking assistance for national statistical offices in bearing the burden of preparing handbooks and compilation guides, and promoting the preparation of manuals in other fields that harmonized with SNA. It also suggested that it could serve as a coordinating body for, and could play a catalytic role with respect to, technical assistance/cooperation and training.

67. Constrained by the limited resources currently available, the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat and the regional commissions, in

close cooperation, outlined plans to assist countries in the implementation of the revised SNA by training trainers and the national accounts staff of national statistical offices, through seminars and country workshops, handbooks, the compilation of software and methodology and other training materials. In the first few years, efforts were likely to be concentrated on the preparation of handbooks and training materials, identification of the basic statistics needed, and pilot implementation projects in a limited number of countries. The projects constituted a combination of efforts under way in a limited number of countries and drew on experience already acquired. It was envisaged that provided new resources became available a much more widespread programme of assistance to countries would develop, based in part on regional and subregional priorities expressed at regional forums.

68. The International Monetary Fund confirmed its active support for all four types of activities to support implementation of the revised SNA. In particular, the fifth edition of the Balance of Payments Manual and a companion volume, a compilation guide, would be published in early 1993. Work had started on a new manual on financial statistics; a complete draft was expected by the end of 1994. During 1993 work would start on revisions to the Manual on Government Finance Statistics, with a new draft expected about the end of 1995. The Fund expected to continue its extensive technical assistance programme in the areas of balance-of-payments, financial and government finance statistics, and would, on request, provide members with specific technical assistance in national accounts.

69. The World Bank welcomed the emphasis placed on rapid implementation of the newly adopted SNA. It would continue to play a role in ISWGNA and work in a coordinated manner with the other agencies, so as to avoid duplicating efforts. Owing to its intimate contact with national statistical agencies, the Bank was of the view that implementation of the revised SNA in many of the developing and transition countries would depend on rapid development of basic economic statistics. Therefore, concerted efforts to build statistical capacities were an essential first step. The Bank endorsed the need for handbooks and manuals but stressed that they should have a practical orientation. Research into outstanding and emerging issues under the auspices of ISWGNA would require the support of national offices. The Bank would continue to consider requests for technical assistance, through loans and credits, on a case-by-case basis.

70. OECD had already begun to collect material on the plans to implement the revised SNA in its member countries. The material would be presented at the National Accounts Working Group, to be held in June 1993 in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). As focal point for the implementation of the revised SNA in countries of the former Soviet Union, OECD had an extensive programme of technical assistance in national accounts for countries of Central and Eastern Europe and of the former Soviet Union which was already based on the revised SNA. Representatives of those countries would be invited to OECD meetings on national accounts and to special workshops and seminars.

71. EUROSTAT was working to develop a new version of the European System of Integrated Economic Accounts (ESA), which would be entirely consistent with the revised SNA and should be completed about mid-1994. Training in national accounts was provided to countries of the European Economic Area and Central and Eastern Europe under a special training programme. A similar programme was being developed for the countries of the former Soviet Union, in close cooperation with OECD. Special assistance would also be offered to countries in the African, Caribbean and Pacific regions, under the terms of Lomé IV, and would involve training centres in both Europe and Africa.

72. Members of the Commission welcomed the suggestions made by ISWGNA regarding its future role. The Commission emphasized the urgent need for adequate handbooks and compilation guides. The guidelines should take note of differences in methodological and data-related problems in implementation in different countries and accordingly provide for a decentralized and specific approach. Those being prepared for countries in transition and dealing with conditions of high inflation were eagerly awaited. Several members mentioned plans to prepare national documentation which could be made generally available. Training and technical assistance were also stressed, and some members offered assistance in that area also.

73. Some members noted that, in general, plans and resources for assistance in the implementation of the revised SNA were already available for countries in the European region, although there was still a lack of clearly identified plans and resources for assistance for developing countries.

74. The Commission endorsed the intention to pursue research into the unresolved issues identified by ISWGNA and to work on future aspects of the accounts - for example, environmental accounting and coverage of the informal sector. However, members cautioned that the research agenda should not be over-long or over-ambitious.

Action taken by the Commission

75. The Commission:

(a) Acknowledged that ISWGNA had proved a very effective mechanism for overseeing the revision process and developing the revised SNA, and expressed the wish that ISWGNA would continue to operate and assume the responsibility for coordinating all aspects of the implementation programme, including preparation of an implementation plan. All the organizations concerned confirmed their continuing commitment to ISWGNA;

(b) Agreed that it would be desirable for the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination to be kept informed, through its Chairman, of actions scheduled by members of ISWGNA;

(c) Welcomed the offers of several member States and regional and international organizations to cooperate and assist in all aspects of the implementation of the revised SNA, as an important part of their work programmes;

(d) Agreed that the United Nations regional commissions should play a major role in the implementation of the revised SNA in their respective regions and urged the Secretary-General of the United Nations to coordinate at a high level the mobilization of both bilateral and multilateral resources for that purpose.

Chapter IV

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CLASSIFICATIONS

A. Implementation of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), Revision 3 and the provisional Central Product Classification (CPC)

76. The Commission considered item 5 (a) of its agenda at its 451st and 457th meetings, on 22 and 25 February 1993. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), Revision 3 and the provisional Central Product Classification (CPC) (E/CN.3/1993/7).

77. The Commission focused its discussion on four topics: (a) the work of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat on computerized correspondence tables between ISIC, CPC, the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS) and the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC), and the related work on indexes to ISIC; (b) further work on the provisional CPC; (c) implementation of ISIC Rev.3; and (d) future work on functional classifications of expenditures.

78. Some countries described their use of ISIC and CPC as a point of reference for national classifications. These required adaptation, as not all national products and activities were reflected in the international classifications. Others thought that ISIC Rev.3 would have to be harmonized with the General Industrial Classification of Economic Activities within the European Communities (NACE). One representative mentioned that in his country a national classification had been developed which reconciled NACE Rev.1 and ISIC Rev.3 with specific national activities. Several participants and the Voorburg Group offered assistance from experiences gained in developing national classifications and correspondences between classifications of different countries and organizations as inputs for future updating of ISIC and further development of CPC.

79. Several participants mentioned that there was an urgent need for the development of an alphabetical or systematic index to ISIC Rev.3 and welcomed the work of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat in that direction. The importance of correspondence tables as important tools for implementation and standardization of classifications in countries was stressed. The Commission welcomed the computerization of correspondence tables between ISIC, CPC, SITC and HS developed by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat and similar bilingual (English and French) correspondence tables developed by EUROSTAT between the Classification of Products by Activity (CPA), NACE and the Classification of the New European Industrial Production Statistics (PRODCOM). With the help of correspondence tables, defining links between international classifications and national classifications, it would be easier to convert data from one type of classification to another and link different analyses, such as those related to domestic production and external trade. Transition economy countries were in need of a link between their activity classifications in the System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS) and other classifications, such as NACE and ISIC Rev.3. That would be necessary when the SNA was introduced.

80. It was agreed that in order to implement further work on ISIC and CPC, the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat would need to coordinate such activities with various international organizations - IMF, the Customs

Cooperation Council (CCC), OECD and EUROSTAT, for example - as well as with other groups, including the Voorburg Group. Several approaches to facilitate cooperation were suggested in order to develop CPC further for adoption as a final classification and bring ISIC Rev.3 closer to national and other international classifications, such as NACE and CPC.

81. One participant commented that the report before the Commission did not include sufficient information to identify the reasons that ISIC Rev.3 had not yet been implemented by many countries. Additional surveys on country practices would be needed in order to obtain further information on the most adequate way of introducing ISIC Rev.3 and of avoiding any obstacles to its full implementation.

82. In the discussion of the provisional CPC, several members mentioned that there was a need to further improve this classification, particularly with regard to the service categories. In order to improve the structure of CPC, it should be made compatible with that of ISIC and the categories should be defined clearly so that they could better serve balance-of-payments needs and other economic analysis needs. CPA developed by EUROSTAT was mentioned as an example of how such a structure and its categories could be improved. It was also suggested that in order to further improve CPC, parts of the classification should be subjected to scrutiny by experts from selected industries. This had been the practice of the Voorburg Group when dealing with selected services. Given all these requirements, there was general agreement that the provisional CPC could not be revised before 1997. The work on finalizing the provisional CPC would have to be based on experience, and the Commission appealed to country experts, international organizations and the Voorburg Group for voluntary contributions.

83. With regard to functional classifications of expenditures, a number of participants thought that the integrated approach as developed in the revised SNA was very important. However, the view was also expressed that an integrated approach was too ambitious and a clearer idea would need to be developed for a common basis of such classifications. The Commission noted that IMF expected to have revised its Manual on Government Finance Statistics by 1994/95. It was important that the Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG) also be revised by that time. International coordination of the work on functional classifications of expenditures was essential and it was suggested that IMF, the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat and EUROSTAT might cooperate in developing such classifications.

84. There was general agreement that work on ISIC Rev.3 and CPC would have priority over work on functional classifications of expenditures. In the latter case, it was suggested that first priority should be given to the further improvement of COFOG and the Classification of Individual Consumption (COICOP).

Action taken by the Commission

85. The Commission:

(a) Requested the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat, in cooperation with the organizations and countries concerned, to continue and finalize work on the provisional CPC, taking into account the fact that a revised version could not be submitted to the Statistical Commission before 1997;

(b) Requested the Statistical Division:

(i) To compile information on country practices regarding the implementation of ISIC Rev.3;

(ii) To continue work on computerized correspondence tables, resulting in the linking of a large number of national and international classifications;

(iii) In cooperation with the other organizations and countries concerned to undertake work on the functional classifications of expenditures;

(iv) To report on the above and submit drafts of the revised COFOG and COICOP to the Statistical Commission at its twenty-eighth session, in 1995, subject to review by the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination.

B. International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE)

86. The Commission considered item 5 (b) of its agenda at its 457th meeting, on 25 February 1993. It had before it the report of the International Labour Office on the revision of the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE) (E/CN.3/1993/8). The text of resolution III, adopted by the Fifteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), held at Geneva in January 1993, was made available to the Commission. The resolution contained the revised international classification of status in employment.

87. The Commission was informed that the adopted revised international classification remained at the one-digit level and retained the structure of the earlier international classification adopted by the Statistical Commission in 1966, namely, "employees", "employers", "own-account workers", "unpaid family workers" and "members of producers' cooperatives". The revised classification, however, provided firmer definitions of the groups and changed the name of one of the groups from "unpaid family workers" to "contributing family workers". The five main groups that made up the revised ICSE were defined with reference to the distinction between "paid employment jobs "on the one hand and "self-employment jobs" on the other. In addition to the main groups, the revised classification identified a number of work situations that countries might wish to identify as separate categories, which in some cases could be classified to different main groups, depending on the particular descriptive and analytical needs. Of particular importance in that context was the category "owner-managers of incorporated enterprises".

88. The Commission was informed that the two-digit classification originally proposed in the ILO report, prepared following the discussion at a meeting of experts convened by ILO at Geneva in January 1992, was considered by the Fifteenth ICLS as too detailed, requiring further examination and field testing. Accordingly, the Fifteenth ICLS noted in the preamble to its resolution III that the experience gained in applying the classification could result in improvements leading to a revision of the resolution at the Sixteenth ICLS.

89. The Commission welcomed the work of ILO and resolution III of the Fifteenth ICLS. Many members and organizations stressed the importance of the classification of status in employment in analysing the national economic and social situations, and expressed their satisfaction with the revised international classification adopted by the Fifteenth ICLS.

90. Some members, however, expressed concern about the definitions and statistical treatment of certain groups and subgroups, in particular, "employees", "own-account workers", "apprentices", "core own-account workers"

and "subsistence workers". In the discussion that followed, it became clear that some of the concerns were due to problems of translation of the title of the classification and the meaning of particular groups ("status in employment" had been translated into Chinese as "conditions of employment"); other problems were due to differences in the use of terminology (in China, the term "employees" was limited to workers in the private sector and "own-account workers" were called "individual workers"). Regarding the subgroups, the representative of ILO said that the section of the resolution concerning subgroups simply outlined a possible statistical treatment of particular groups of workers and did not form part of the International Classification of Status in Employment.

91. One member commented on the conceptual basis of the revised international classification and mentioned a more sophisticated scheme of classifications available for determining the activity status of the population for alternative reference periods - one day, one week or one year.

92. In response to a query regarding the supplementary indicators on the underemployment and unemployment situation, the representative of ILO informed the Commission that that issue had been given priority in his organization's work programme: a meeting of experts was scheduled to be convened by ILO at Geneva during the biennium 1994-1995.

Action taken by the Commission

93. The Commission:

(a) Endorsed the revised International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE) adopted by the Fifteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (resolution III of 28 January 1993);

(b) Welcomed the future work called for by the Fifteenth ICLS in the preamble to its resolution III to verify in operational terms the conceptual basis of ICSE and the relevance of the groups and subgroups proposed;

(c) Noted that because the basic structure of the classification had been retained, major new technical cooperation in implementing the revised ICSE was not currently required.

Chapter V

INDUSTRIAL STATISTICS

94. The Commission considered item 6 of its agenda at its 459th meeting, on 26 February 1993. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the World Programme of Industrial Statistics (E/CN.3/1993/9). A draft background paper on strategies for measuring industrial structure and growth, which had been prepared by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat in collaboration with the Institute of Social Studies Advisory Service (ISSAS) of the Netherlands, was made available to the Commission.

95. The Commission welcomed the report of the Secretary-General and expressed appreciation for the work undertaken in its preparation.

96. The Commission also expressed continued support for the World Programme of Industrial Statistics and welcomed the simplified approach taken for the collection of benchmark data. It stressed the importance of the early publication of data from the 1993 World Programme. Although there was concern that wider country participation had not been achieved, some members indicated that they would participate in the programme for the first time. It also appeared that because some African countries had collected benchmark data under programmes supported by bilateral arrangements, they might not have considered themselves part of the World Programme. Doubt about the continued relevance of the World Programme was also expressed, however, particularly in the context of countries with very extensive programmes for the collection of current industrial statistics.

97. Concerning the broader aspects of industrial statistics, the Commission recognized that the need for current national industrial statistics programmes was influenced by the economic situation of each country. It also stressed the need for an integrated flow of current information. The Commission welcomed the draft background paper on strategies for measuring industrial structure and growth. It considered that the paper would be helpful for developing countries in planning the improvement of their current industrial statistics programmes, and recommended its publication.

98. The Commission stressed the importance of the changeover from ISIC Rev.2 to Rev.3 and of any measures that would contribute to that goal, as well as the need to identify and address impediments to the changeover. It noted the close relationship between that subject and the issues raised under agenda item 5 (a) on the implementation of ISIC and the provisional CPC. In that connection, the Commission welcomed the plans of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat to carry out further studies of national experiences, focusing on the impediments to the use of those classifications for both national and international purposes. Such studies would be carried out within the framework of an industrial statistics task force established by the Commission's Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination. Statistics Canada offered to provide the Statistical Division with a detailed product list prepared jointly with the United States of America and EUROSTAT, to be used for the conversion of data for industry to ISIC Rev.3. That would be a useful guide to the conversion process, along with the one-to-one correspondence guide prepared by the Statistical Division. It was also noted that modifications of the international standards for industrial statistics should be harmonized with the revised SNA.

99. The Commission was informed that OECD would convene the first meeting of the task force on industrial and construction statistics in the spring of 1993.

In addition to covering issues in industrial statistics, the task force would also give attention to related work on activity and product classifications.

100. With regard to the international collection and dissemination of general industrial statistics, the Commission considered it essential that the activity continue. It noted that one of the options that the Statistical Division had put before the Commission was to cancel volume I of the Industrial Statistics Yearbook, with effect from 1994, along with the related data-collection activities (see E/CN.3/1993/CRP.1). The Commission noted that it would return to the matter under agenda item 15 (b). The representative of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) said that his organization would consider whether it could assume those responsibilities. The Commission stressed that any change in the arrangements at the international level for the collection and dissemination of general industrial statistics should proceed in as smooth a manner as possible. Furthermore, it considered that efforts would have to be made to improve the quality, coverage and consistency of industrial statistics to meet user needs. All those issues would have to be addressed quickly by the industrial statistics task force.

101. The representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) said that the information on medical and pharmaceutical products compiled by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat through its Supplementary Questionnaire on Industrial Commodity Production Statistics and published in volume II of the Industrial Statistics Yearbook was suitable for his organization.

Action taken by the Commission

102. The Commission:

(a) Noted that the industrial statistics programme of the Statistical Division was going through a period of transition, and welcomed the steps that had been taken to re-orient the programme since the twenty-sixth session;

(b) Supported the publication of the paper on strategies for measuring industrial structure and growth, prepared by the Statistical Division in collaboration with ISSAS; the Division would carry out further work in that area;

(c) Stressed the importance of any measures that could contribute to the changeover from ISIC Rev.2 to Rev.3 and the need to identify and address impediments to the changeover;

(d) Requested the Statistical Division to carry out further studies of national experiences in the use of ISIC Rev.3 and the provisional CPC to better understand how countries were using those classifications, the problems they were encountering in their use and their experiences in relating such classifications to existing national or regional classifications;

(e) Emphasized the importance of maintaining continuity in the collection and dissemination of general industrial statistics at the international level regardless of institutional arrangements for that activity;

(f) Requested that the question of current industrial statistics be included in the agenda of the Commission at its twenty-eighth session, in 1995, subject to review by the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination.

Chapter VI

SERVICE STATISTICS

103. The Commission considered item 7 of its agenda at its 459th meeting, on 26 February 1993. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General containing a review of the work done by national and international agencies in the field of service statistics (E/CN.3/1993/10);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1993/24, sect. II).

104. The Commission welcomed the information on recent activities and on the proposed future work of international agencies contained in the report of the Secretary-General. The report provided a useful summary of work in service statistics. The Commission recognized that despite impediments to methodological work and data collection, considerable efforts were being made to respond to the needs of policy analysts for data in that field. The information needs related to such topics as short-term indicators, price and quantity indexes in respect of trade in services, and comprehensive statistics on the structure of the service sector, including basic data on service activities in the informal sector.

105. In its discussion of activities to advance service statistics, the Commission expressed strong support for testing classification standards and active participation in voluntary cooperative arrangements such as the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics. It was emphasized that those were essential steps in the process of development in view of the complexity of methodological work. In that regard, the Commission acknowledged the effectiveness of the work of the Voorburg Group. The Commission noted that the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat had included the technical report, A Model Survey of Computer Services, which was produced by the Voorburg Group, in its regular publication programme. The view was expressed that the model survey of computer services was a useful aid in survey design and data collection. The Commission requested the Statistical Division to carry out an inquiry into the use of that publication by national statistical offices. It took note of the Voorburg Group's offer to contribute forthcoming model surveys in several other fields to the United Nations publications programme. The Commission agreed to a review process for those new model surveys. The Statistical Division would circulate the documents to the regional commissions for review so that it could determine the best way of dissemination.

106. The Commission also welcomed the efforts of the Statistical Division in the dissemination of methodological materials contributed by the Voorburg Group to a wider group of countries. It also stressed the importance of using the traditional methods of expert group meetings to develop needed methodological materials in that field and urged the Division to work cooperatively with other international and regional organizations to arrange such meetings.

107. With respect to international trade in services, the Commission noted that there were difficult methodological issues to be addressed, including definitional issues involving cross-border and establishment trade that required urgent attention. The Commission therefore welcomed the proposal that UNCTAD, GATT and UNSTAT collaborate to advance work on trade-in-services statistics, in cooperation with IMF.

108. The Commission also stressed the need for technical cooperation in the area of service statistics.

Action taken by the Commission

109. The Commission:

(a) Stressed the importance of work on service statistics, including the development of needed methodologies, concepts and classifications;

(b) Welcomed the work of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics and the countries and organizations volunteering their efforts in that connection;

(c) Requested the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat to facilitate the dissemination of technical materials, including those developed by the Voorburg Group, to ensure that a wide range of countries had access to information on such methodological work on service statistics;

(d) Emphasized the importance of using traditional forms for developing international methodologies, particularly United Nations expert group meetings to ensure full involvement of developing countries in that process;

(e) Welcomed the initiatives of UNCTAD, GATT and the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat, in cooperation with IMF, to carry out further methodological development work with respect to international trade in services;

(f) Stressed the need for enhancing technical cooperation related to service statistics through advisory services and regional seminars.

Chapter VII

PRICE STATISTICS

110. The Commission considered item 8 of its agenda at its 458th meeting, on 25 February 1993. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on developments in the International Comparison Programme (ICP) and other related international comparison issues (E/CN.3/1993/11);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1993/24, sect. III).

A background paper on the latest developments in the International Comparison Programme (ICP), prepared by the Statistical Division, was made available to the Commission.

111. The Commission took note with appreciation of the progress made in the past two years regarding work on international comparisons at both the regional and global levels and examined the methodological and organizational issues described in the reports. The Commission agreed that ICP was a very important programme and supported its continuation.

112. The Commission noted that the global results of the comparison with 1985 as the reference year had been produced and that the draft report was being reviewed. Many members of the Commission emphasized the importance of improving the timeliness of the publication of the global results and urged that for the 1993 comparison the timetable should be strictly adhered to in order to ensure timely release of the results, which would enhance their usefulness.

113. Several members of the Commission mentioned methodological issues, such as the trade-off between representativeness and comparability, which need further attention. The Commission recognized that as more countries joined ICP through regional comparisons or other ways, the question of sample design had become critical. The Commission welcomed the offer made by the representative of the United States to assist in the organization of a technical meeting on sample design to improve the existing specification lists.

114. The Commission was informed of the expert group meeting on ICP methodology and implementation of the 1993 comparison programme (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 27-29 January 1993), which had been organized by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat with major financial support from the World Bank and in cooperation with the University of Pennsylvania. The Commission expressed support for the plan of future activities agreed on at the meeting. The new direction and rethinking of the programme had been highlighted at the meeting: these would be a departure from the costly practice of launching benchmark year comparisons every five years and a move towards integration with work on national accounts and consumer price indexes. That new direction was endorsed by the Commission.

115. The Commission expressed appreciation for funding support for the programme provided by the Government of Japan, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, EUROSTAT and OECD to assist various activities and country groups. It also commended the excellent cooperation among international organizations involved in the programme. The Commission took note with appreciation of the World Bank's efforts in the dissemination of ICP results through diskettes, and the

Bank's undertaking, jointly with EuroCost, to develop ICP software. The Commission welcomed the interest and willingness of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) to be involved in the 1993 African comparison programme. It took note with appreciation of the work carried out by the regional coordinating agencies - EUROSTAT coordinating comparisons of the Community countries; OECD of its 24 member countries, taking account of the role of EUROSTAT in relation to the Community countries; EUROSTAT and OECD, in collaboration with ECE and the Austrian Central Statistical Office, coordinating comparisons of countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia; EuroCost coordinating comparisons of African countries; the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) coordinating the comparison in Asia and the Pacific; the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) is expected to coordinate comparisons among Latin American countries.

116. The Commission stressed the importance of the central coordinating role of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat in promoting harmonized methodology, developing the procedure for global linking, in particular the application of the core commodity approach, and performing information exchange functions. The Commission emphasized that priority be given to work directly related to the completion of the 1993 global comparison.

117. Members emphasized the importance of implementing the recommendations of the revised SNA in ICP work. One member recommended that the functional classifications of household and government expenditures being developed in connection with the revision of the SNA also take into account ICP needs.

118. In response to concerns expressed by some of its members, the Commission reiterated its position that, at the world level, ICP results should not be used for administrative purposes.

119. The Commission noted the proposal that it would be more appropriate to refer to the various rounds of the ICP exercise by indicating the reference year of the comparison.

Action taken by the Commission

120. The Commission:

(a) Took note of the increasing number of countries participating in ICP, stressed its importance and endorsed the continuation of the programme;

(b) Reconfirmed the central coordination role of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat in ICP;

(c) Emphasized the cooperative efforts of all international organizations concerned and expressed appreciation of the efforts of the participating countries;

(d) Endorsed the results of the Philadelphia meeting on ICP and suggested that priority be given to activities that were agreed on at the meeting, in particular the preparation and dissemination of harmonized technical documents;

(e) Requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission, at its twenty-eighth session, in 1995, a progress report on developments in ICP and on other related international comparison issues, subject to review by the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination.

Chapter VIII

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL STATISTICS

A. Population and housing censuses

121. The Commission considered item 9 (a) of its agenda at its 459th meeting, on 26 February 1993. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on population and housing censuses (E/CN.3/1993/12, sect. I).

122. The Commission welcomed the progress report on the 1990 World Population and Housing Census Programme (E/CN.3/1993/12, sect. I.A) and noted with satisfaction that a majority of countries had undertaken a population and/or housing census in the 1990 round. It was also pleased to learn that many countries had planned to conduct a mid-decade census or an intercensal survey in order to obtain more up-to-date population and housing information, since a decade between successive censuses was too long to capture many rapid social and economic developments.

123. The Commission emphasized the importance of dissemination, analysis and utilization of population and housing census data and preparation of post-censal population estimates. It pointed out that efforts should be made to promote the use of data not only by government agencies, but also by the public. The Commission noted with appreciation that the United Nations, through its technical cooperation activities, had assisted countries in undertaking census analysis. It noted with satisfaction that the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat, with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), had organized a series of interregional workshops on population databases and related topics to assist countries in their work on census data dissemination and utilization.

124. The Commission noted that cartographic work was among one of the most importar elements of census preparation and therefore urged the United Nations to assis. countries by providing them with information on new cartographic developments. Census methodological studies on such topics as questionnaire design, pre-testing of census procedures and census quality control should be prepared and made available to countries.

125. The Commission discussed the apparent increase of non-response to certain census items in some countries and attributed such increases to, among other things, concerns about invasion of privacy and complicated questionnaire design. Other related enumeration problems included high mobility of the population, households whose members were difficult to find at home, bad weather conditions, and remote geographical location. The Commission urged countries to conduct intensive census publicity campaigns in order to obtain public cooperation.

126. The Commission also noted the usefulness of the optical reading technology that would greatly facilitate census data capture, and suggested that an assessment be made of its appropriateness in the light of census requirements and technological conditions of the developing countries in order to assist in planning the 2000 round of censuses.

127. The Commission stressed the importance of housing censuses and urged countries to undertake an integrated population and housing census in the 2000 round of censuses.

128. At the request of EUROSTAT, the Commission also considered the topic of international migration because of its current importance in Europe. It was

pointed out that European countries were using different definitions, resulting in statistics on migration flows that were not comparable. The Commission considered the topic to be of importance. It was noted that international migration flows affected all regions and international migration was an area of statistics where international recommendations were of special importance. Comparability of international migration data was considered extremely important for deriving emigration statistics. The Commission agreed that the United Nations recommendations on international migration statistics, which had not been revised for 20 years, should be reviewed. It was recognized, however, that the issues involved were complex - for instance, the concept and length of residency. Further, the present recommendations were harmonized with other standards in related fields, particularly international tourism, refugees and the SNA. Those issues would need to be borne in mind in any future work in that area.

Action taken by the Commission

129. The Commission:

(a) Expressed its satisfaction with the work carried out by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations regional commissions and UNFPA, among others, in connection with the 1990 World Population and Housing Census Programme;

(b) Requested the Statistical Division, in collaboration with the United Nations regional commissions, to make preparations for the 2000 round of population and housing censuses. In that connection, the Commission emphasized the importance of census methodological studies on such issues as census cartography, the improved measurement of economic activity, including the use of the revised economic classifications, the use of modern technology, sampling, census pre-testing and quality control, as well as the publication of subject-matter handbooks and technical reports for the 2000 round;

(c) Requested the Secretary-General to report to the Statistical Commission, at its twenty-eighth session, in 1995, on the preparations undertaken in connection with the 2000 round of population and housing censuses, subject to review by the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination;

(d) Requested the Statistical Division to initiate work on the review of the current recommendations on international migration statistics, in cooperation with United Nations regional commissions, EUROSTAT, and other organizations concerned.

B. Civil registration and vital statistics

130. The Commission considered item 9 (b) of its agenda at its 459th meeting, on 26 February 1993. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on progress in implementing the international programme for accelerating the improvement of vital statistics and civil registration systems (E/CN.3/1993/12, sect. II;

(b) Report of the Secretary-General containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1993/24, sect. IV).

131. The Commission took note of the above reports.

C. Statistics on special population groups

132. The Commission considered item 9 (c) of its agenda at its 459th meeting, on 26 February 1993. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on statistics on special population groups and databases (E/CN.3/1993/12, sect. III);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1993/24, sect. V).

133. The Commission took note of the above reports.

D. Statistics on the advancement of women

134. The Commission considered item 9 (d) of its agenda at its 460th meeting, on 26 February 1993. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on statistics on the advancement of women (E/CN.3/1993/12, sect. IV).

135. The Commission commended the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat for achieving a high degree of international collaboration and coordination in its gender statistics programme. It praised the high quality and success of the publication prepared under the programme, The World's Women, 1970-1990, as an outstanding example of a statistical publication geared to user needs. The Commission noted that extensive use was being made of the publication and of the related women's activities database for a wide range of policy planning purposes. It pointed out that The World's Women filled a critical need by organizing and presenting gender-specific statistics in a widely accessible format, and expressed strong support for the quality of the statistical analysis and the presentation.

136. The Commission also emphasized the value of the programme's data compilation activities as a model for the efficient coordination of data-sharing arrangements among the statistical services of the international agencies that imposed no additional reporting burden on countries.

137. At a more general level, the Commission pointed to the critical importance of gender statistics as a tool for integrating women into development. It gave strong support to the Statistical Division's programme on gender statistics and to its approach of integrating gender statistics into all areas of its work.

138. The Commission emphasized in particular the need to strengthen gender concerns in economic statistics. It recognized the need to fully incorporate measurement and valuation of unpaid work into relevant economic statistics programmes.

Action taken by the Commission

139. The Commission:

(a) Expressed its great appreciation of the Statistical Division's work programme on gender statistics and strongly supported its continuation;

(b) Called on the Statistical Division to act as a focal point to ensure continued coordination and integration of international work in that field;

(c) Called on all of the international statistical services concerned to provide maximum support to national, regional and international preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, to be held in 1995.

Chapter IX

ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS

140. The Commission considered item 10 of its agenda at the 459th and 460th meetings, on 26 February 1993. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on environment statistics (E/CN.3/1993/13);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1993/24, sect. VI).

141. The Commission attached great importance to the assessment of environmental problems at the national and international levels. It was pointed out that developing countries faced different environmental problems and were primarily concerned with keeping their natural resource base intact. Problems of valuation arose because of non-market activity in primary sectors and differential environmental effects on different population groups. Those concerns had to be addressed by basic physical statistics and natural resource accounts.

142. The Commission expressed its broad support for the work carried out by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat in environment statistics. It emphasized the importance of setting priorities in that large and complex field of statistics. One way to address those priorities would be to deal with simpler questions first before embarking on more difficult issues.

143. The Commission stressed the need for improved coordination in environment statistics, environmental indicators and integrated environmental and economic accounting. It also took note of the statement of the Statistical Division, as convener of the task force on environment statistics, that it would draft an inter-agency work programme for review by the task force. The Commission considered it appropriate that the Division take a leading role in the coordination of environment statistics and accounting at the international level, while recognizing the major substantive contributions of other organizations such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), OECD, the World Bank and the regional commissions.

144. The importance of technical cooperation in the field of environment statistics and environmental accounting was emphasized. In that connection, the support provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank was recognized. It was important, nevertheless, that technical cooperation efforts in environment statistics be expanded.

145. The Commission welcomed the ongoing work of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Advancement of Environment Statistics and requested that such work continue. It expressed its appreciation to the Government of Germany for sponsoring the third meeting of the Group. The Commission took note of the new elements incorporated into the work programme of the Group, notably the development of environmental indicators and indicators of sustainable development, as well as the plan to cover all countries in the survey of country practices in environment statistics. It also recommended that relevant aspects of environmental accounting be incorporated into the work programme of the Group. One representative mentioned the possibility of his Government's sponsoring the forthcoming meeting of the Group.

146. The Commission took note of the request by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) that the Statistical Division of the United Nations secretariat pursue the development of indicators of sustainable development. It was noted that with regard to the development of environmental indicators, different international organizations were currently developing such indicators, notably OECD, UNEP and the World Bank. The Statistical Division should take fully into account the work of those organizations in its work on environmental indicators, with a view to adapting it for global use and application. The need to keep the number of indicators to a minimum was stressed.

147. The Commission noted with appreciation the work of the Statistical Division in environmental accounting, in particular the preparation of an interim SNA Handbook on Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting. The need for training in that relatively new field was stressed. More resources should be allocated to that work, which should address both physical resource accounting as well as complex conceptual questions of monetary environmental accounting such as valuation. Physical resource accounting should be further developed as an integral part of the System of Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting. The need to develop those methodologies in an open and transparent manner was also stressed.

Action taken by the Commission

148. The Commission:

(a) Took note of the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development regarding the development and implementation of integrated environmental and economic accounting;

(b) Expressed its general support of the work of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat in the areas of environment statistics, indicators and accounting, which should be carried out in full cooperation and coordination with ongoing international work;

(c) Welcomed the preparation of an interim SNA Handbook on Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting, which, in accordance with the request of UNCED, should be widely distributed and further developed by the statistical Division in cooperation with other international organizations and national experts in the field;

(d) Stressed the need to build national capacities in developing countries in all areas of environment statistics by means of handbooks, training seminars, workshops and country projects;

(e) Requested that the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Advancement of Environment Statistics continue its current work, incorporating the development of environmental and sustainable development indicators and relevant aspects of environmental acccunting.

Chapter X

TOURISM STATISTICS

149. The Commission considered item 11 of its agenda at its 460th meeting, on 26 February 1993. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the World Tourism Organization (WTO) containing draft recommendations on tourism statistics (E/CN.3/1993/14);

(b) Draft Standard International Classification of Tourism Activities (SICTA) (PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/83).

150. The Commission was informed of the vital role that the tourism sector played in the national economy of many countries and the growing demand for comprehensive data on tourism flows, tourist expenditure, hotel facilities and so on. In that context, several members expressed appreciation to WTO for preparing the report and emphasized that the adoption of international standards would provide a sound basis for developing national tourism statistics.

151. It was suggested that in future data collection programmes, particular attention be given to information on market segments, including cultural and rural tourism. A suggestion was also made that some categories of SICTA, such as hotels, needed to be further disaggregated so as to be more responsive to user needs.

152. It was pointed out that mobility of people within a country was increasing. Several difficulties, both conceptual and practical, in the identification of domestic tourism and proper methods to measure it were noted.

153. Several members stressed that in developing countries there was an urgent need for training of tourism statisticians. The preparation of manuals and the organization of regional training seminars were considered essential for those countries.

Action taken by the Commission

154. The Commission:

(a) Adopted the draft recommendations contained in the report by the World Tourism Organization on tourism statistics (E/CN.3/1993/14) and the Standard International Classification of Tourism Activities (SICTA) (PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/83) as a provisional classification for use by countries and requested that they be published and widely distributed;

(b) Emphasized the need for technical cooperation activities, including training workshops and technical handbooks and guidelines, to assist countries in the implementation of WTO recommendations on tourism statistics.

Chapter XI

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRATION OF METHODOLOGICAL WORK, INCLUDING DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

A. General development and integration of methodological work

155. The Commission considered item 12 (a) of its agenda at its 457th and 458th meetings, on 25 February 1993. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on general development and integration of methodological work, covering, in particular, energy statistics, international trade statistics and international seaborne trade statistics (E/CN.3/1993/15);

(b) Joint report of the Secretary-General and the general agreement on Tariffs and Trade on the future relationship between the Harmonized Commodity description and Coding System (HS) and the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC), Revision 3 (E/CN.3/1993/15/Add.1);

(c) Report of the Secretary-General containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1993/24, sect. VII).

156. The Commission noted that (a) the existing United Nations concepts and definitions in international trade statistics had been issued prior to the coming into force of HS and SITC Rev.3; (b) some parts of the existing concepts could be made clearer for users; (c) country practices had been found to deviate from the recommendations and required study; and (d) there was a need to ensure that the recommendations in that field were consistent with those in the revised SNA and balance of payments. In respect of (c) above, the Commission was informed of partial results of a survey enumerating differences between country practices and the international recommendations - for example, differences in the treatment of such items as monetary and non-monetary gold and military goods.

157. The Commission considered that the study of country practices that was under way in the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat through library research and a questionnaire developed by the international agencies was extremely useful and that the results would be of interest to countries. Particular support was expressed for the ongoing work in the Division on price and quantity indexes in international trade. The Commission noted with regret that the Division had terminated its work on international seaborne trade statistics, but welcomed the initiative taken by the Division with a commercial organization to provide access by several international organizations to the shipping database of that organization. Although several organizations had found that source of data to be useful, the specific needs of some of the organizations did not appear to be fully met through that approach. The work of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics was brought to the attention of the Commission.

158. The Commission noted that more than 100 countries were using HS for primary compilation and dissemination of their trade statistics and that many countries also recompiled the HS-based data into SITC for analytical purposes. Other countries were expected to adopt HS in the future. The Commission recalled that it had previously decided that HS would serve as building blocks for the harmonization of international economic classifications, including SITC. On the

basis of the discussion and the information contained in document E/CN.3/1993/15/Add.1, which supported the adoption of HS at the national level, the Commission broadly endorsed the use of HS at the national level for primary compilation and dissemination for international trade statistics.

159. The Commission took note of the reasons for revision of HS and the procedures that were followed by the Customs Cooperation Council for approving revisions. The Commission stressed the importance of minimizing the statistical effects of changes in HS, and of maintaining as far as possible continuity in statistical series, while allowing the classification to accommodate and identify changes in commodity flows. The Commission broadly endorsed the view that statisticians at the national and international levels should place specific recommendations with the Customs Cooperation Council, and that proposed changes should ensure that statistical needs were accommodated in addition to the other needs that the classification was intended to satisfy.

160. A range of views was expressed on the desired future relationship between HS and SITC Rev.3. The Commission recalled some aspects of its discussion at the time of adopting SITC Rev.3: the classification had been adopted in part to provide suitable aggregates for economic analysis reflecting current developments; the correlation between HS and SITC Rev.3 was to be established and maintained; and SITC Rev.3 would provide an up-to-date basis for a world trade matrix with internationally comparable commodity data. The point was also made that users were familiar with SITC and any change would need to be well thought out and retraining implications considered. The Commission also considered that in deriving SITC data from HS data, the most efficient technical solution should be adopted; taking resource requirements into account. The Commission supported revision of SITC Rev.3 at the time of the 1996 revision of HS to keep the former up to date with developments in product flows and to keep full correlation with HS at the most detailed level possible. However, there was also a strong view that in the longer term SITC Rev.3 should be dropped, preferably at the time of the next revision of HS.

161. In that connection, the Commission considered that the future CPC could be used as the classification for analytical purposes for international trade statistics, thereby replacing SITC Rev.3 and trade data compiled in terms of HS could be converted into a CPC basis. The Commission decided to return to the question when the revision and evaluation of the provisional CPC was completed.

Action taken by the Commission

162. The Commission:

(a) Took note of the information on energy statistics, international trade statistics and international seaborne trade statistics contained in the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1993/15) and the oral report made by the convener of the task force on international trade statistics on the work and plans of the task force;

(b) Requested the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat, in cooperation with relevant international organizations, to revise the existing United Nations concepts and definitions on international trade statistics to ensure their adequacy and clarity in relation to current circumstances relating to international trade statistics and to ensure their harmonization with the revised SNA and balance of payments;

(c) Requested the Statistical Division to publish the results of the research into country practices for international trade statistics, carried out by the international organizations and make them available to countries;

(d) Recommended that countries adopt HS for compilation and dissemination of their international trade statistics, should they be intending to change their commodity classification for their own purposes;

(e) Recommended that the Customs Cooperation Council take fully into account the statistical implications of any changes proposed for HS and the statistical needs and capacities of developing countries;

(f) Requested the Statistical Division to revise SITC Rev.3 at the most detailed level in full correlation with the revised HS and to issue the revision so that it would be effective 1 January 1996, the date of introduction of the revised HS;

(g) Decided to consider the use of CPC in place of SITC Rev.3 for analytical purposes as soon as the provisional CPC had been revised and evaluated.

B. Development indicators

163. The Commission considered item 12 (b) of its agenda at its 460th meeting, on 26 February 1993. It had before it the report of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) on patterns of consumption and qualitative aspects of development (E/CN.3/1993/16).

164. The Commission noted that that programme activity had originally been undertaken by UNRISD as a follow-up of General Assembly resolution 40/179 and had been reviewed by the Commission periodically. The Economic and Social Council, in resolution 1991/94, had reaffirmed the objectives of Assembly resolution 40/179 and had requested the statistical Commission to keep the issue of patterns of consumption and qualitative indicators of development under consideration.

165. The Commission noted the great importance in current development issues of appropriate social indicators and statistics covering a wide range of social and human development concerns, and it welcomed the work of UNRISD, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), WHO and the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat among others, and of individual countries to promote the collection and analysis of statistics and indicators for that purpose. It emphasized the need for feasible, well-coordinated indicators and called on the Statistical Division to take a leading role in coordinating international work.

166. The Commission was informed that the meeting of Experts on Qualitative Indicators of Development (Rabat, Morocco, April 1991) had been held in an effort to identify the most recent advances and shortfalls in selecting and applying quantitative indicators of development and to highlight areas in which new research or better application of existing knowledge was needed. The Rabat meeting had revealed that efforts to implement systems of qualitative indicators of development in low-income countries continued to experience problems in data collection, processing and dissemination.

167. Some participants felt that good progress was being made at the national and international levels in the compilation of basic indicators and analyses which were directly based on basic data sources in countries, but it was agreed

that many serious challenges in data availability and in methodology remained, particularly for more complex types of indicators. The Commission felt that it was essential to meet those challenges effectively to ensure the continuing relevance of social statistics to contemporary social issues around the world. At the same time, however, the Commission expressed considerable caution with regard to the development of derived indicators aimed at measuring such complex, many-sided issues as poverty or human development, particularly for purposes of international comparability. Some representatives expressed the view that in selecting and identifying development indicators, due attention should be paid to including a few appropriate indicators measuring level of economic development.

168. In terms of overall programme planning, the Commission emphasized the importance of a clear understanding of methods, objectives and scope in any indicator development programme and of international collaboration to pool scarce resources and ensure coordinated and consistent results.

Action taken by the Commission

169. The Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of UNRISD on qualitative indicators of development and expressed its appreciation of the extensive work undertaken by the Institute in that field, including the organization of the expert meeting at Rabat in April 1991;

(b) Agreed that indicator programmes should aim at limited, practical objectives and be closely linked to user needs;

(c) Requested the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat to act as focal point to promote full collaboration and coordination at the international level in work on development indicators;

(d) Recommended the intensive continuation of planned research work on sound statistical methodology for derived indicators on such complex social topics as poverty;

(e) Cautioned against the use of complex indicators and indices without a clear understanding and statement of their limitations, particularly for international comparisons;

(f) Agreed that high priority should be assigned to the selection and compilation of appropriate indicators to support preparation of the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in 1995;

(g) Agreed to include the question of development indicators in the agenda of its twenty-eighth session, in 1995, subject to review by the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination.

Chapter XII

TECHNICAL COOPERATION

A. Technical cooperation in statistics

170. The Commission considered item 13 (a) of its agenda at its 461st meeting, on 1 March 1993. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on technical cooperation in statistics (E/CN.3/1993/17).

171. The Commission welcomed the report of the Secretary-General as a useful overview of technical cooperation in statistics carried out by the United Nations system. It also welcomed the inclusion in the report of preliminary information on the impact of General Assembly resolution 44/211 and the new agency support cost arrangements on the provision of technical cooperation in statistics.

172. A number of suggestions for improving the report were made: it should contain information on expenditure in real terms; provide more detailed classification of expenditure by subject area; include expenditures for technical cooperation in statistics supplied directly to Governments by UNFPA and UNDP; provide more detailed information on technical cooperation projects in Africa; and provide more information on training.

173. Several participants provided information on their countries' bilateral programmes of technical cooperation in statistics. Representatives of regional commissions and international organizations provided additional information. Many members from developing countries expressed their appreciation of the technical cooperation in statistics and the support provided by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat, the regional commissions and several other international agencies, including FAO, WHO, the World Bank, IMF, UNDP and UNFPA. The Commission was pleased to learn of the planned activities of AFRISTAT, a technical cooperation effort organized by several African countries in cooperation with the Government of France.

174. The Commission expressed concern about the overall decrease in resources allocated to the technical cooperation programme in statistics. It recognized that the decreased level of resources for demographic statistics during 1991 and 1992 could be attributed to the cycle of population and housing censuses that peaked at the end of each calendar decade. The decrease in the funds devoted to data processing and informatics could be at least partly attributed to the drop in the price of equipment. Nevertheless, over the next several years it recognized that the expenditure on technical cooperation in statistics would decline as policies related to the national execution of projects affected a larger proportion of the United Nations system's technical cooperation programme.

175. The Commission reiterated the concern expressed at its twenty-sixth session that the share of resources available for economic statistics was not adequate and urged those donors that had economic statistics within their mandates to increase the provision of support to such technical cooperation. Specific mention was made of the need for increased attention to and support for the implementation of the newly approved revised SNA. The Commission's approval of the new SNA was described as a watershed in statistical development. Trade and industrial statistics were also areas in which additional technical cooperation was urgently required.

176. The Commission was pleased to be informed about the activities of the Committee on Statistics of the Commonwealth of Independent States in promoting the coordinated statistical development of its member countries as well as of the inter-agency coordinating committee on technical cooperation in statistics for the countries of the former Soviet Union. Although the special importance of and challenges involved in technical cooperation to the countries with economies in transition, including the countries of the former Soviet Union was recognized, concern was expressed lest such attention divert technical support from developing countries.

177. The Commission was concerned that during the period under review, statistical training had remained a very small component of the total expenditure, particularly in view of the share given to personnel costs, and urged increased support for the training component of the programme. The Commission, however, noted that in addition to the expenditure reported under the training component, training was provided by the interregional, regional, technical advisers and specialists and project staff. Such expenditure was included under personnel and field staff. Concern was also expressed about the small share of assistance given to the acquisition of data-processing equipment during the recent period. The Commission welcomed the decision by Japan and UNDP to continue to provide support to the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) in view of the many important training courses which SIAP had organized over the years.

178. The Commission noted that General Assembly resolution 44/211 and UNDP Governing Council decision 90/26 provided the overall framework for United Nations technical cooperation activities in all fields and for a new agency support cost system. The Commission understood that the aim of the new system was to enhance the technical capabilities of institutions in developing countries through national execution of programmes at the country level. Several participants expressed concern that changes in agency support cost arrangements were seriously affecting the ability of the regional commissions to deliver advisory services consistent with country needs on a timely basis. Questions were raised about the full establishment and operation of UNFPA Country Support Teams and effective communication with the regional commissions. The Commission was pleased to learn how UNFPA was attempting to refine its new system. At the same time, the Commission looked forward to the results of the study initiated by the ESCAP Committee on Statistics on the new support cost arrangements and their impact on national statistical offices. Furthermore, the Commission requested for its session in 1995 an assessment of the overall impact at the country level of the new arrangements for the delivery of technical cooperation in statistics.

179. The Commission stressed the importance of coordination of technical cooperation activities, its efficiency and effectiveness. Many Governments and national statistical offices were making major contributions in statistical development and technical cooperation activities in addition to the technical cooperation activities of the international agencies. The Commission emphasized the role of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat and the regional commissions in promoting coordination of technical cooperation projects in statistics and the role of national statistical offices in coordination at the country level. It also emphasized the special role in the African region of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s. The Plan of Action provided a framework for statistical development and technical cooperation in statistics in the African region. The Commission urged that any future technical cooperation activities in the region be organized within the framework of the Plan of Action.

Action taken by the Commission

180. The Commission:

(a) Stressed the great importance of technical cooperation programmes and endorsed the current technical cooperation activities in statistics carried out by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat and other international and regional organizations;

(b) Emphasized the importance of technical cooperation related to national accounts and other types of economic statistics and urged that resources allocated to that component be increased;

(c) Requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission, at its twenty-eighth session, in 1995, a report on technical cooperation in statistics including an assessment of the impact of General Assembly resolution 44/211 and the new agency support cost arrangements on the implementation of the technical cooperation programme in statistics, subject to review by the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination.

B. National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP), the Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA) programme and the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS)

181. The Commission considered item 13 (b) and (c) of its agenda at its 458th meeting, on 25 February 1993. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Joint report of the Secretary-General and the World Bank on progress in the implementation of the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP), the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) and the Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA) programme (E/CN.3/1993/18);

(b) Joint report of the Secretary-General and the World Bank on selected issues relating to the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP), the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) and the Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA) programme (E/CN.3/1993/19);

(c) Report of the Secretary-General containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1993/24, sect. VIII).

182. The Commission welcomed the joint report on selected issues and expressed its satisfaction that its appeals at its twenty-sixth session for the programmes of NHSCP and LSMS/SDA to work in closer coordination and cooperation had been heeded. It noted that the most effective cooperation was at the country level, though it should be more systematized, and was pleased to cite the example of Mali (E/CN.3/1993/19, annex). It also noted that coordination at the country level had to be supplemented by coordination at the programme level, which it was pleased to see had been effective, particularly with respect to development of technical materials.

183. The Commission found the progress report to be helpful, and noted that the three programmes underlined the capability of household surveys in many countries, despite difficulties encountered in their implementation.

184. The Commission stated that institution-building at the country level was a critical component in the development and application of household survey methodology and urged that, with regard to Africa, the future strategy for

development of household surveys should be promoted within the context of the Strategy for the Implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s (E/ECA/CM.18/10/Add.1).

185. The Commission urged that future initiatives with respect to NHSCP and LSMS/SDA should emphasize the policy relevance of surveys, noting that for decision makers the construction of such useful products as poverty profiles was invaluable and should be continued and expanded. Several examples of how the survey data were being used for policy design purposes were cited, but the view was also expressed that much fuller use could still be made of them and that further efforts were needed to promote such usage. The Commission urged that more work be done to develop "light" surveys or those with quick turnaround.

186. The Commission recognized that many of the differences in approach, methodology and objectives between NHSCP and LSMS/SDA were unavoidable, but those differences should not inhibit the agencies from working closely together, especially at the country level. It was noted, with respect to data requirements, that the SDA programme was more ambitious than NHSCP in terms of its requirements for timeliness but that SDA drew upon the experience of NHSCP in developing countries where the latter had been instrumental in establishing household survey capability.

187. Some of the methodological differences between NHSCP and SDA, such as the use or lack of master samples, were noted, but again it was agreed that those differences correctly reflected the objectives of the survey within a particular country and should not be seen as competing methodological strategies.

188. Some members pointed out that the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers, at its seventh session, in March 1992, had endorsed the African Household Survey Capability Programme (AHSCP), the regional component of NHSCP, as one of the most useful programmes of the African region. The uniqueness of NHSCP as an "umbrella" programme was also noted, since it drew the best out of all components of the United Nations system - that is, the regional commissions, the specialized agencies and the United Nations Secretariat - through its networking arrangements of coordination. It was urged that the core components of NHSCP be institutionalized within the context of the regular programmes of technical cooperation of the United Nations system.

189. The Commission noted that the experiences of African countries in implementing poverty monitoring systems using the household survey programmes could be of relevance and interest to countries elsewhere experiencing similar rapid social and economic change.

190. At the regional level, the Commission was informed of much progress with respect to the implementation of continuing household surveys, including training in methodology, in several countries of ECLAC and ECA and also with respect to the utilization of results such as social indicators on the poverty situation of those countries.

Action taken by the Commission

191. The Commission:

(a) Expressed its appreciation of the improved spirit of cooperation between the NHSCP, LSMS and SDA programmes;

(b) Supported the importance of promoting such cooperation at the country level first and foremost, while extending such cooperation up to the programme level;

(c) Recognized that the policy relevance of the surveys was very important and that continued efforts were needed to promote full use of the survey results;

(d) Agreed that methodological differences were unavoidable but should not be a barrier to cooperation;

(e) Encouraged countries implementing poverty-monitoring based on household surveys to share their experiences with other countries not participating in NHSCP, LSMS or SDA;

(f) Urged that the core components of NHSCP be institutionalized within the context of regular programmes of technical cooperation of the United Nations system.

C. Monitoring the achievement of social goals in the 1990s

192. The Commission considered item 13 (d) of its agenda at its 461st meeting, on 1 March 1993. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the programme to monitor the achievement of social goals in the 1990s and related methodological work (E/CN.3/1993/20). It also had before it, for information, the report of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) on patterns of consumption and qualitative aspects of development (E/CN.3/1993/16), which had been considered under item 12 (b).

193. The Commission welcomed the report of the Secretary-General, which described the progress made in the development of an inter-agency programme to monitor the achievement of social goals in the 1990s. It was encouraged to note the level of international cooperation among the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNFPA, UNDP and the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat - the members of the Inter-Agency Working Group.

194. The Commission agreed that there was a clear need to monitor the achievement of social goals but noted that that was only one set of needs faced by national government statistical agencies. Each country had to decide on its own programme, taking account of national resources, capability and objectives. The Inter-agency Working Group effort should promote collection of data to compile indicators to measure social goals in such a way that other priority areas were not disrupted. In that connection, it was felt that social and economic statistical programmes should be coordinated and integrated and not seen as competing with each other for scarce national resources.

195. The Commission agreed that it was not possible to have a common approach for all countries. In Africa, for example, many countries had built up their household survey capability through the National Household Survey Capability Programme and such countries would not need so much external support as those with less capability. However, the role of practical manuals on how to use social indicators was recognized.

196. The Commission stressed that population and housing censuses had a critical role to play in monitoring programmes because, to the extent that data from those censuses addressed the relevant indicator needs, they might be the only cost-effective vehicle for producing the subnational geographical distribution that so many countries needed for proper monitoring.

197. The Commission noted that many countries were in fact already preparing the priority social indicators that the Inter-agency Working Group had identified. In that context, countries should not be encouraged to change their priorities or operations significantly. What the Inter-agency Working Group wanted to emphasize was that steps needed to be taken urgently to improve the timeliness and quality of data used in compiling the indicators.

198. The Commission noted that the synthesis report on the pilot studies undertaken in five countries painted a familiar but not encouraging picture on national capability to monitor social goals, and it emphasized that the development of practical manuals on how to use available data for monitoring and policy planning should be a top priority for the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat in 1993 and 1994.

199. The Commission agreed that the work of the Statistical Division in 1993 and 1994 with regard to monitoring the achievement of social and human development goals was appropriate and urged that the programme be enhanced.

200. The Commission considered it essential that efforts to monitor the achievement of social goals be linked with policy planning and design and, in that connection, the ECLAC programme to link its work on poverty profiles with the development of economic policy was cited. ECLAC was also carrying out, together with UNICEF, an important regional effort to monitor the goals of the World Summit for Children.

201. The Commission emphasized the need for inter-agency cooperation and coordination in resolving conceptual and definitional issues on compilation of indicators. It noted the ongoing collaboration between WHO and UNICEF in that respect and welcomed the proposal to broaden the Inter-agency Working Group to include WHO, UNESCO, FAO and the World Bank.

202. The Commission noted that the work of the Inter-agency Working Group and related work in the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat would take on additional importance because of the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in 1995.

Action taken by the Commission

203. The Commission:

(a) Agreed that national needs with respect to social goal monitoring and measurement were paramount in guiding the future development of the global programme;

(b) Emphasized the utmost need for inter-agency collaboration in further development of that work;

(c) Endorsed the further work of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat on the subject;

(d) Urged that the developmental work of ECLAC be reflected in future development of the programme at the global level and invited ECLAC to submit to the Commission at its twenty-eighth session, in 1995, a paper on its work in the development of poverty profiles, as it had significance for all regions.

Chapter XIII

COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL PROGRAMMES

204. The Commission considered item 14 of its agenda at its 462nd, 463rd and 464th meetings, from 1 to 3 March 1993. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its fourteenth session (E/CN.3/1993/2);

(b) Report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its fifteenth session (E/CN.3/1993/21);

(c) Report of the Secretary-General containing an overall review of the statistical work of international organizations (E/CN.3/1993/22);

(d) Report of the Secretary-General on the plans of international organizations in the area of statistics (E/CN.3/1993/23).

205. The Commission noted that most of the subjects covered in the reports of the Working Group on its fourteenth and fifteenth sessions had been considered under other items of the agenda, namely international trade, adjusting nationally reported data to improve international comparability and preparing estimates for non-reported data, revision of the SNA, coordination of statistical data collection activities of international organizations, survey programmes of the United Nations and the World Bank, and strengthening international statistical cooperation. The Working Group's review of the agenda and documentation for the present session of the Commission were reflected in the final agenda and documentation of the session.

206. The Working Group had noted in its report (E/CN.3/1993/2, sect. IV) that several countries had expressed concern about the impact of reductions in statistical resources on the possibilities of providing the data needed for long-term economic and social development. The Working Group had endorsed that concern and, given the important role of statistics, had decided to bring it to the attention of the Statistical Commission. The Commission endorsed the recommendation of the Working Group to bring the concern to the attention of relevant intergovernmental bodies so that they might take it into account in their fields of responsibility.

207. The Commission recalled the extensive discussion it had held on documents E/CN.3/1993/22 and E/CN.3/1993/23, including coordination aspects, under agenda items 15 (a) and 15 (b) (see chap. XIV).

Action taken by the Commission

208. The Commission:

(a) Welcomed the work of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination, which had contributed much to the Commission's consideration of many of the items on its agenda, in particular item 3 (Strengthening international statistical cooperation);

(b) Requested the Secretariat to bring to the attention of relevant intergovernmental bodies the concerns expressed by countries, and endorsed by

the Working Group and the Commission, about the impact of reductions in statistical resources on the possibilities of countries providing the data needed for their long-term economic and social development.

209. The commission decided that the Working Group at its sixteenth session should comprise:

(a) Officers of the Statistical Commission at its twenty-seventh session:

Chairman: W. Begeer (Netherlands)

Vice-Chairmen: Hiroyasu Kudo (Japan)
Miguel Cervera Flores (Mexico)
Josef Olenski (Poland)

Rapporteur: Jothan Antony Mwaniki (Kenya)

(b) Representatives of States members of the Statistical Commission:

Eurico de Andrade Neves Bora (Brazil
Hans Guenther Merk (Germany)
R. Thamarajakshi (India)
Katherine Wallman (United States of America)
David S. Diangamo (Zambia)

(c) Alternates selected from representatives of States members of the Statistical Commission:

Hector Eduardo Montero (Argentina), alternate to
Miguel Cervera Flores (Mexico)
Zhang Sai (China) alternate to R. Thamarajakshi (India)
Emmanuel Oti Boateng (Ghana) alternate to David S. Diangamo (Zambia)
Vernon James (Jamaica) alternate to
Eurico de Andrade Neves Bora (Brazil)
Naima Ghemires (Morocco) alternate to Jothan Antony Mwaniki (Kenya).

210. The Commission recalled the recommendation of the Working Group concerning its sixteenth session, and its own decision, reached after extensive discussion under agenda item 3 (Strengthening international statistical cooperation), that the Working Group should meet annually for four days (see para. 33 (a) above). The Commission noted that it had assigned many tasks to the Working Group to be carried out in the immediate future. Consequently, the Commission strongly recommended that the sixteenth session of the Working Group be held at Geneva for four days, from 13 to 16 September 1993.

Special session of the Statistical Commission

211. At the 463rd meeting, on 2 March 1993, the observer for Canada 3/ introduced a draft resolution (E/CN.3/1993/L.6) entitled "Special session of the United Nations Statistical Commission", which read as follows:

"The Economic and Social Council,

"Recalling that the Statistical Commission has completed a fundamental review of the structure and operation of the international statistical

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3/ In accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

system and, as a result, has made recommendations for strengthening the international statistical system through the following:

"(a) A more active Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination to monitor progress in coordination/cooperation within the international statistical system between sessions of the Statistical Commission;

"(b) Strengthened United Nations regional commissions and their statistical divisions in terms of their responsibilities for statistical development in their regions;

"(c) Establishment of six task forces as mechanisms for developing a more integrated work programme among international organizations in the following subject-matter areas: national accounts; industrial and construction statistics; international trade statistics; finance statistics; price statistics; and environment statistics;

"Requests that there be a special session of the Commission in 1994 of four to five days' duration for the purpose of reviewing progress being made in the implementation of the recommendations for strengthening the international statistical system."

212. At the 464th meeting, on 3 March, the Commission orally amended the draft resolution.

213. At the same meeting, the Commission noted the statement on the programme budget implications of the draft resolution read by the Secretary of the Commission. The Commission decided that the provisions of the draft resolution should be implemented within the approved budget limit set by the General Assembly for the biennium 1994-1995.

214. The Commission then adopted the draft resolution, as orally amended (see chap. I, sect. A, draft resolution II).

Chapter XIV

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

A. Programme performance and implementation

215. The Commission considered item 15 (a) of its agenda at its 461st and 462nd meetings, on 1 March 1993. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General containing an overall review of the statistical work of international organizations for the period January 1990 to December 1991, and up to November 1992 for the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1993/22);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1993/24).

Relevant material from the report of the Secretary-General on the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1990-1991 (A/47/159/Add.1) was made available to the Commission.

216. The Commission expressed its general satisfaction with the new format of the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1993/22). The Commission was of the view that although the new format was a substantial improvement over the old one, there was still room for improvement. Suggested improvements included the addition of analytical statements for each major area, more up-to-date reporting of information, better classification of subjects used and more comprehensive coverage in terms of the agencies included. Nevertheless, the Commission considered that the report was informative and provided a good summary overview of the activities of the United Nations system and other international organizations under subject-matter headings, as had been requested by the Working Group at its fifteenth session (E/CN.3/1993/21, annex II, para. 45).

217. The Commission agreed that the report was mainly intended to give comprehensive and essential background information on the programme and coordination. It was suggested that for future sessions, the relevant material should be specifically identified for each of the substantive topics on the Commission's agenda. The report could also be submitted as part of the documentation for the items on coordination and on programme implementation. It was felt that the new format provided the needed panoramic view, and it was essential, among other uses, to identify gaps and overlaps within the global statistical system. The report was therefore seen as an instrument for identifying areas for more in-depth review and coordination and as a valuable reference tool for informing the Commission and its Working Group of global statistical activities.

218. The Commission regretted the absence of information on OECD and EUROSTAT in the report, but noted that such information would be contained in a joint document being prepared by ECE, OECD and EUROSTAT on their work programmes for consideration by the Conference of European Statisticians at its forthcoming session.

Action taken by the Commission

219. The Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Secretary-General providing an overall view of the statistical work of the international organizations as a valuable general reference tool for use in programme review and coordination among the international statistical organizations;

(b) Endorsed the new format as facilitating that general reference purpose;

(c) Requested the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination to consider, at its forthcoming session, further improvements in the report as an overall reference tool - for example, the addition of analytical summaries for each section that explicitly identified gaps, apparent overlaps and other issues of concern; further simplification and streamlining where possible; improving timeliness of the information for organizations other than the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat, and ensuring more complete coverage of international statistical organizations;

(d) Requested the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities also to consider those improvements and other possible improvements, including improving the classification of the subject areas and functional areas used;

(e) Requested the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat in cooperation with the various international and regional organizations concerned, to prepare a similar report for the twenty-eighth session of the Commission, in 1995, incorporating as far as practicable the suggestions for improvement.

B. Programme objectives and planning

220. The Commission considered item 15 (b) of its agenda at its 462nd meeting, on 1 March 1993. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on plans of the international organizations in the area of statistics E/CN.3/1993/23);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on the proposed work programme of the Statistical Division for the biennium 1994-1995 and revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 E/CN.3/1993/25);

(c) Note by the Secretariat on the proposed work programme of the Statistical Division for 1994-1995 and related information (E/CN.3/1993/CRP.1).

The Commission also had before it proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997: major programme IV (International economic cooperation for development), programme 24 (Statistics) (A/47/6 (Prog. 24)).

221. During the discussion, the Commission focused on two different sets of issues: those related to planning and programming for the global system as a whole and those related to the proposed work programme for the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat. With regard to the first set of issues, the Commission noted that a number of the suggestions and comments it had made under item 15 (a) related to improving the basic report (E/CN.3/1993/22) (see sect. A above) also applied to document E/CN.3/1992/23.

222. With regard to the proposed programme of work of the Statistical Division for 1994-1995 (E/CN.3/1993/CRP.1), the Commission welcomed the proposals as being broadly responsive, both in format and content, to the decisions of the Working Group at its fifteenth session and the Commission at its twenty-sixth session. It also largely anticipated many of the decisions taken by the Commission at its twenty-seventh session. Nevertheless, a number of modifications would have to be introduced to reflect specific decisions made by the Commission during its consideration of specific substantive items at its present session.

223. The Commission also generally supported the options set out in document E/CN.3/1993/CRP.1 to modify the Statistical Division's proposed programme of work to enable the Secretariat to do more on coordination of international statistics and services to national statistical offices, although some concern was expressed about each proposed option.

224. With regard to the suggestion that the collection of general industrial statistics data be suspended and that volume I of the Industrial Statistics Yearbook not be produced in the biennium 1994-1995, one member of the Commission viewed it was a reduction in the area of methodological work. The absence of the Yearbook would be a loss to many countries with transition economies. A more cautious approach would be to consider changing the periodicity of the Yearbook and/or reformatting it to exclude data shown in other publications in order to avoid duplication.

225. Some participants expressed concern at the proposal to reduce the level of support for the International Comparison Programme (ICP) and in particular how that proposal would affect the agreements reached at the ICP Expert Group Meeting held at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in January 1993. The Commission emphasized that the Statistical Division should focus more on targeted functions that were not inconsistent with reduced resources. The Commission agreed that the objectives of the Division on the ICP issue should be carefully limited and selected to ensure its essential coordinating role.

226. Although the Commission recognized that changes in the programme would be necessary to accommodate the priority functions identified by the Commission, it requested the Statistical Division to implement the options in an orderly manner and in consultation with other agencies so that, as far as possible, disruptions would be minimized. One member suggested that that could be achieved if the Division put more effort into methodological issues and delegated other work to specialized agencies.

227. The Commission welcomed the ongoing efforts of the Statistical Division to evaluate publications in consultation with users, and commended the evaluation work already undertaken. The Commission felt that such evaluation might identify ways of better focusing the publications programme. It also noted that, apart from questions concerning specific outputs, some savings could be achieved in the publications programme through the transfer of some outputs to electronic formats, such as CD-ROM, and that other options for savings, such as reduction in frequency and less detailed formats, should be explored. The Commission noted the fact that data collection was one of the major expenditure items in statistical work.

Action taken by the Commission

228. The Commission:

(a) Approved the proposed work programme of the Statistical Division for the biennium 1994-1995 as contained in the note by the Secretariat (E/CN.3/1993/CRP.1), subject to the comments and suggestions made by the Commission;

(b) Approved the following elements of the work programme as priority items for the biennium 1994-1995: (i) work on the coordination of the global statistical system, and services to national statistical offices, including developing countries and countries with economies in transition; (ii) implementation of the revised System of National Accounts; (iii) environment statistics, environmental indicators and environmental accounting; (iv) strengthening computer processing systems and support; (v) preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, to be held in 1995, and other work related to improving gender statistics; (vi) preparations for the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in 1995; and (vii) preparations and support for the 1995-2004 Population and Housing Census Decade.

Revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997

229. The Commission agreed that suggestions for further revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 would be considered by the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination at its forthcoming session.

Chapter XV

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

230. The Commission considered item 16 of its agenda at its 460th meeting, on 26 February 1993. It had before it a note by the Secretariat transmitting decision C (47) on fundamental principles of official statistics in the region of the Economic Commission for Europe, adopted by ECE on 15 April 1992 (E/CN.3/1993/26).

231. The Commission noted the background to the development of the decision and its intended objectives and that the Conference of European Statisticians was of the opinion that the decision was of universal significance. During the discussion, several members expressed supportive views. The Commission noted that supportive views had also been expressed by a number of countries and regions (see E/CN.3/1993/26), and also noted the specific plans to consider the matter further within the ESCAP region. The Commission expressed support for the ideas underlying the decision.

Action by the Commission

232. The Commission:

(a) Requested the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination to contact the regional statistical divisions with a view to having ECE decision C (47) circulated to all countries in their regions, indicating the views expressed (see para. 231 above), and with a request to consult with the countries in the most appropriate way (possibly through the bureau of the regional conference of chief statisticians, where such a body existed) and to obtain the opinions of the countries concerning the possible application and usefulness of the principles set out in the decision at the regional and global levels;

(b) Requested the regional statistical divisions to forward the outcome of the consultation to the Working Group as soon as possible;

(c) Requested the Working Group, at its forthcoming session, to review the situation on the results of the consultation and set up further plans, with a view to preparing a draft set of principles at the world level for submission to the Commission at its twenty-eighth session, in 1995.

Chapter XVI

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

233. The Commission considered item 17 of its agenda at its 463rd meeting, on 2 March 1993. It had before it a working paper prepared by the Secretariat, containing the list of topics that the Commission had decided to consider during the biennium 1994-1995 and a draft provisional agenda for the proposed special session of the Commission in 1994, containing those items which the Commission considered particularly urgent.

234. It was suggested that the twenty-eighth session of the Commission, scheduled for 1995, the fiftieth anniversary of statistical work at the United Nations might be marked in an appropriate way. The Commission noted that the International Statistical Institute would hold a related symposium early in 1995 and requested that the Institute report to the Commission on that symposium. One delegation expressed its support for the selection of "National and international statistical issues resulting from the emergence of customs and economic unions" as a special topic for the twenty-eighth session.

235. It was made clear that under item 3 of the draft provisional agenda for the proposed special session in 1994 (Strengthening international statistical cooperation) the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination would report on the work of the six task forces established by the Commission (see para. 44 above).

236. The view was expressed that future agendas should be made more innovative, if the changes envisaged during the session were to be implemented. A shorter, more concise agenda would help the Commission focus more directly on the important issues. The point was made that there was relatively little time to accomplish all the preparations required for the proposed special session in 1994. The Commission recalled that at its twenty-sixth session it had emphasized the need to receive the documentation for its twenty-seventh session in good time. It regretted that that goal had not been fully achieved for the present session and requested that documents be issued earlier for the forthcoming session to promote more fruitful discussions. The Commission welcomed the possibility that national statistical offices and international organizations could become more involved in providing documentation for the Commission.

Action taken by the Commission

237. The Commission:

(a) Considered the list of topics for the biennium 1994-1995 contained in the working paper prepared by the Secretariat and, subject to final review by the Working Group, approved the provisional agenda for the twenty-eighth session, as orally amended, based on items included in the work programme for 1994-1995 (E/CN.3/1993/CRP.1), which the Commission had approved, and items resulting from decisions of the Commission at its present session, and also approved the provisional agenda for the proposed special session in 1994;

(b) Requested the Working Group to review the items and requested documentation for the twenty-eighth session and the provisional agenda and requested documentation for the proposed special session in 1994 to ensure that the sessions were focused on the important issues;

(c) Recommended to the Economic and Social Council:

(i) That the proposed special session be held at United Nations Headquarters from 22 to 26 March 1994 and the twenty-eighth session from 20 to 29 March 1995, subject to further review by the Working Group;

(ii) The approval of the provisional agenda and documentation for the twenty-eighth session, in 1995 (see chap. I, sect. 3, draft decision I);

(iii) The approval of the provisional agenda and documentation for the proposed special session in 1994 (see chap. I, sect. 3, draft decision II).

Chapter XVII

ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Opening and duration of the session

238. The Statistical Commission held its twenty-seventh session at United Nations Headquarters from 22 February to 3 March 1993. The Commission held 15 meetings (451st to 465th).

239. The session was opened by the temporary Chairman, Mr. W. Begeer (Netherlands).

240. The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis addressed the Commission.

B. Attendance

241. The session was attended by all 24 States members of the Commission. Observers for other States Members of the United Nations and for a non-member State, representatives of the Secretariat, United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, and observers for intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations also attended. A list of participants is given in annex I below.

C. Election of officers

242. At its 451st meeting, on 22 February 1993, the Commission elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairman: W. Begeer (Netherlands)

Vice-Chairmen: Hiroyasu Kudo (Japan)
Miguel Cervera Flores (Mexico)
Josef Olenski (Poland)

Rapporteur: Jothan Antony Mwaniki (Kenya)

D. Agenda and organization of work

243. At its 451st meeting, on 22 February 1993, the Commission adopted the provisional agenda contained in document E/CN.3/1993/1, as orally amended (see annex II below).

244. At the same meeting, the Commission approved the organization of the work of the session (see E/CN.3/1993/L.2), as orally amended.

Chapter XVIII

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

245. At its 464th and 465th meetings, on 3 March 1993, the Commission adopted the chapters of the draft report on its twenty-seventh session contained in documents E/CN.3/1993/L.4 and Add.1-4, as amended during the discussion. The remaining chapters of the draft report were circulated in English only and approved by the Rapporteur.

Annex I

ATTENDANCE

Members

Argentina: Héctor E. Montero, Lelia B. de Cervetto*, Oscar Avalle*

Australia: I. Castles, F. J. von Reibnitz*, R. W. Edwards*

Brazil: Eurico de Andrade Neves Borba, Ronaldo Costa Filho*, Magdalena Sophia C. de Araújo Góes*, Lucia Elena Garcia de Oliveira*, Luciano Martins*

China: Zhang Sai, Long Hua*, Feng Nailin*, Xu Xianchun*

Czech Republic: Eduard Souček, Jan Fischer*

France: Paul Champsaur, Jean-Louis Bodin*, Marie-Hélène Amiel**, Jean Etienne Chapron**, André Vanoli**

Germany: Hans Guenther Merk, Gerhard Buergin*, Waltraud Moore*, Susanne Kasten**

Ghana: E. Oti Boateng

India: R. Thamarajakshi

Jamaica: Vernon James, Roland Booth*

Japan: Hiroyasu Kadu, Akihiko Ito*, Masao Kato*, Masato Okamoto**, Yasuhisa Ino**, Joji Sawada**

Kenya: Jotham Antony Mwaniki

Mexico: Miguel Cervera Flores, Antonio Puig Escudero*, José Robles*, Patricia A. Belmar*, Enrique Ordaz López*

Morocco: Naima Ghemires, Abdellatif Belkouch*, Ahmed Amaziane*

Netherlands: W. Begeer, A. P. J. Abrahamse*, W. F. M. de Vries*, S. Keuning**

Pakistan: Abdul Karim Lodhi

Poland: Jozef Olenski, Jolanta Szczerbinska*, Wojciech Ponikiewski*

Russian Federation: Pavel F. Guzhvin, Anatoly M. Danilin*

Sweden: Gösta Guteland, Chris Denell*

Togo: Nouridine Bouraima

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* Alternate.

** Adviser.

Ukraine: Mykola I. Borysenko, Igor V. Goumenny*

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: W. McLennan, D. C. L. Wroe*, J. Pullinger*, A. Pritchard*, R. M. Allen*, A. Grant*, R. A. Barnett*

United States of America: Katherine Wallman, Suzann Evinger*, Hermann Habermann**, Katrina Reut**, John Hurley**, Walter Neece**, Carol Carson**+

Zambia: David S. Diangamo

States Members of the United Nations represented by observers

Albania, Algeria, Belarus, Canada, Cuba, Egypt, Italy, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Turkey

Non-member State represented by an observer

Switzerland

United Nations

Department of Economic and Social Development, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Population Fund, Economic Commission for Africa, Economic Commission for Europe, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, secretariat of the International Civil Service Commission

Specialized agencies and GATT

International Labour Organisation, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Health Organization, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

Intergovernmental organizations

Customs Cooperation Council, European Economic Community, Inter-American Development Bank, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States, World Tourism Organization

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+ At the request of the Commission, Ms. Carson also participated in the session on behalf of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts.

Non-governmental organizations

Category II: International Statistical Institute

Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities

Roster: International Association for Research in Income and Wealth

Expert adviser

Willem A. Van Den Andel

Annex II

AGENDA OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION

1. Election of officers.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

3. Special topic:

   Strengthening international statistical cooperation.

4. National accounts and balances:

   (a) System of National Accounts (SNA);

   (b) Implementation of the revised System of National Accounts (SNA).

5. International economic classifications:

   (a) Implementation of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), Revision 3 and the provisional Central Product Classification (CPC);

   (b) International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE).

6. Industrial statistics.

7. Service statistics.

8. Price statistics.

9. Demographic and social statistics:

   (a) Population and housing census;

   (b) Civil registration and vital statistics;

   (c) Statistics on special population groups;

   (d) Statistics on the advancement of women.

10. Environment statistics.

11. Tourism statistics.

12. General development and integration of methodological work, including development indicators:

   (a) General development and integration of methodological work;

   (b) Development indicators.

13. Technical cooperation:

   (a) Technical cooperation in statistics;

(b) National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP), the Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA) programme and the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS);

(c) Monitoring the achievement of social goals in the 1990s.

14. Coordination and integration of international statistical programmes.

15. Programme questions:

(a) Programme performance and implementation;

(b) Programme objectives and planning.

16. Fundamental principles of official statistics.

17. Provisional agenda for the twenty-eighth session of the Commission.

18. Report of the Commission on its twenty-seventh session.

Annex III

LIST OF DOCUMENTS BEFORE THE COMMISSION AT ITS TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Document symbol	Agenda item	Title or description
A/45/6/Rev.1 (Prog.24)	15 (b)	Medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997: programme 24 (Statistics)
A/47/6 (Prog.24)	15 (b)	Revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997: programme 24 (Statistics)
E/CN.3/1993/1	2	Provisional agenda
E/CN.3/1993/2	3, 14	Report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its fourteenth session
E/CN.3/1993/3 and Add.1	3	Comments on the recommendations and decisions contained in the report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its fifteenth session, work done and additional action required for implementation: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1993/4	4 (a)	Revision of the System of National Accounts (SNA): report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts
E/CN.3/1993/4/Add.1 and Add.2	4 (a)	Recommendations of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts on specific issues concerning the revised SNA: report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts
E/CN.3/1993/5	4 (a)	Statistics of employment in the informal sector: note by the International Labour Office
E/CN.3/1993/6	4 (a) and (b)	Implementation of the revised System of National Accounts (SNA): report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts

Document symbol	Agenda item	Title or description
E/CN.3/1993/7	5 (a)	Implementation of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), Revision 3, and the provisional Central Product Classification (CPC): report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1993/8	5 (b)	Revision of the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE): report of the International Labour Office
E/CN.3/1993/9	6	World Programme of Industrial Statistics: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1993/10	7	Work done by national and international agencies in the field of service statistics: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1993/11	8	Developments in the International Comparison Programme (ICP) and other related international comparison issues: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1993/12	9	Demographic and social statistics, including statistics on the advancement of women: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1993/13	10	Environment statistics: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1993/14	11	Draft recommendations on tourism statistics: report of the World Tourism Organization
E/CN.3/1993/15	12	General development and integration of methodological work, including development indicators: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1993/15/Add.1	12 (a)	General development and integration of methodological work: joint report of the Secretary-General and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
E/CN.3/1993/16	12 (b)	Patterns of consumption and qualitative aspects of development: report of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

Document symbol	Agenda item	Title or description
E/CN.3/1993/17	13 (a)	Technical cooperation in statistics: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1993/18	13 (b) and (c)	Joint report of the Secretary-General and the World Bank on National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP), the Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA) Programme and the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS)
E/CN.3/1993/19	13 (b) and (c)	Joint report of the Secretary-General and the World Bank on selected issues
E/CN.3/1993/20	13 (d)	Report of the Secretary-General on the programme to monitor the achievement of social goals in the 1990s and related methodological work
E/CN.3/1993/21	3, 14	Report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its fifteenth session
E/CN.3/1993/22	14, 15 (a)	Report of the Secretary-General containing an overall review of the statistical work of international organizations
E/CN.3/1993/23	14	Report of the Secretary-General on the plans of international organizations in the area of statistics
E/CN.3/1993/24	4 (a), 7, 8, 9 (b) and (c), 10, 12 (a), 13 (b) and (c), 15 (a)	Updated information on the work of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1993/25	3, 15 (b)	Proposed programme of work of the Statistical Division for the biennium 1994-1995 and revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1993/26	16	Fundamental principles of official statistics: note by the Secretariat

Document symbol	Agenda item	Title or description
E/CN.3/1993/CRP.1	3, 15 (b)	Proposed programme of work of the Statistical Division for 1994-1995 and related information: note by the Secretariat
E/CN.3/1993/L.1	2	State of preparation of documentation for the session: note by the Secretariat
E/CN.3/1993/L.2	2	Organization of the work of the session: note by the Secretariat
E/CN.3/1993/L.3	17	Provisional agenda for the twenty-eighth session of the Commission: note by the Secretariat
E/CN.3/1993/L.4 and Add.1-4	18	Draft report of the Commission
E/CN.3/1993/L.5	4 (a)	Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Poland and Zambia: draft resolution
E/CN.3/1993/L.6	14	Canada: draft resolution
PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/SER.F/2/REV.4	4 (a)	Final draft of the revised System of National Accounts (SNA)
PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/83	11	Draft Standard International Classification of Tourism Activities (SICTA)

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